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STATUS, POWER, AND RESOURCES : THE STUDY OF A SINHALESE VILLAGE

by

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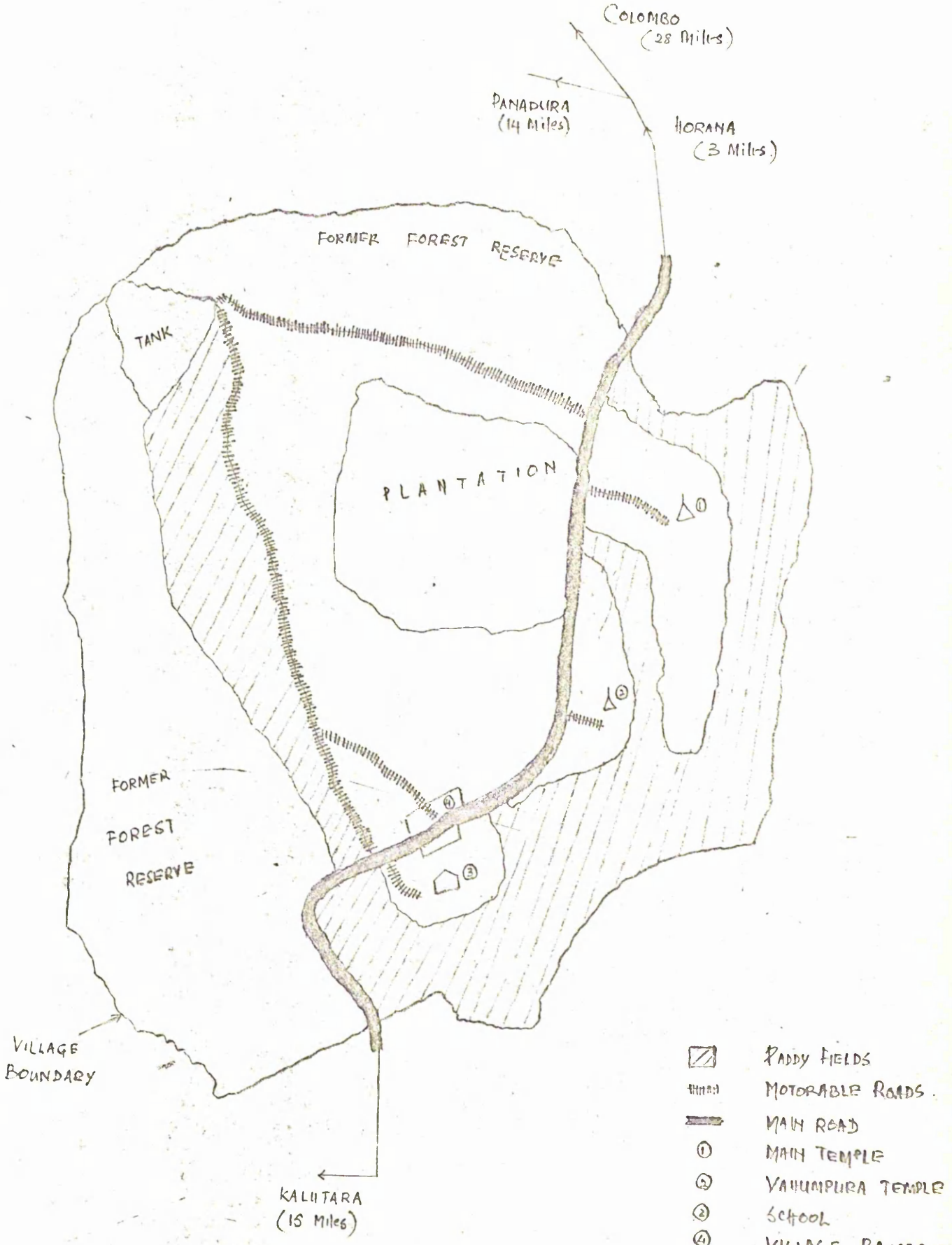
MAP of REMUNA



ABSTRACT

Planners and administrators in Ceylon have encountered many problems in devising schemes which are beamed at the rural sector. One of these has been an insufficient knowledge of the mechanics of village action. In more specific terms, data is needed on the values which guide economic endeavour, the type of mobility that is desired and the re-alignments of power brought about by new influences.

This is the broad area with which this study is concerned. It sets out to examine these aspects in a village in the hinterland of Colombo, taking the resources available to the community as its main focus of investigation. It attempts to examine how these resources are distributed - the problem of who has access to what resources. It also examines the advantages of power and leadership which can be derived through the control of each type of resource. Finally, it attempts to identify and explain the norms and values which govern the distribution of resources.

The bulk of the thesis is devoted to an examination, from this point of view, of the four main types of resources to which the village has access: land; the ritual, caste and other services needed by the community; employment and the other external resources which can be tapped; the aid made available by the government for village welfare

and development.

The argument in the final chapter revolves around thathwaya (status) and its importance in village life. It is my contention that the complex of resources particular to the village has generated a corresponding system of values. I suggest that thathwaya not only reveals how the resources are distributed but that it is also the embodiment of these values. It is, therefore, a mechanism through which resources are controlled.

NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The fieldwork on which this study is based was completed in September 1968. When the present tense is used in the text it is to this time that it refers.

The Sinhalese terms that I have used are few - a glossary of the main ones is provided. In spelling these I have followed the usage that is current among users of English in Ceylon. For convenience I have avoided the Sinhalese form for the plural; instead I have added an 's' to the singular. All names used are pseudonyms.

This study was made possible through the very generous leave given me from my duties at the National Museum, Colombo. For this, as well as for his keen interest in the project, my most grateful thanks are due to the Director, Dr. P.H.D.H. de Silva.

My time in the village was a very happy one. Despite my association in village eyes with 'government', I was accepted very readily into the life of the village. I would like to record here my deep gratitude to the people of Remuna.

In London my biggest debt has been to Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf. His knowledge of Ceylon has enabled him to take a sympathetic view of the problem I attempt to deal with and of the context from

which it arises. The encouragement that I have received at every stage of the study has been a great source of confidence. My thanks are also due to Mrs. von Fürer-Haimendorf for many acts of hospitality.

I have received much stimulus and guidance from other members of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, School of Oriental and African Studies. In particular, I wish to thank Professor A.C. Mayer and members of his Research Seminar for valuable comments on a series of papers written in connection with this thesis.

My thanks to my wife for the encouragement and assistance that I have received throughout this study are more than I can adequately express.

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Chapter One

THE VILLAGE

I The Background

The Government of Ceylon, shortly after independence in 1948, set up a Department of Rural Development. Its function was to act as a catalyst in a self-help movement in which the village level Rural Development Society was to be the main unit. At first strategy appeared to relate to goals very satisfactorily but this optimism was short-lived. Before long there were doubts about policy, objectives and methods.

During the eight years that preceded the commencement of the present study the whole movement had been under investigation. In 1955 - 56 Professor Christopher Sower of Michigan State University had carried out an evaluative study, in the course of which Rural Development societies and the contexts in which they functioned, were examined in different parts of the country. The data which this study yielded had been further analysed by

others. In 1962 Sower made another study, his concern this time being with the "role of organisations in achieving national development goals."[1] During this period other types of village societies had been the subject of similar investigations.

All these studies attempted to reach conclusions which were statistically derived and which would have country-wide application. They were doubtless of use in the formulation of broad policy, but appear to have given little help to the administrator in understanding the mechanics of a concrete situation. It was felt,therefore, that it would be useful to have a detailed investigation in which a single Rural Development Society was examined in relation to the setting in which it functions. In view of my association with Sower's 1955 - 56 study this task fell to me.

Even before I began work in the selected village it became clear that there was no particular logic in examining the Rural Development Society alone. The fortunes of the other village societies revealed similar and related problems and there was much to be gained by examining these as a whole. Shortly after I started work it was apparent that the societies should, at least temporarily, cease to be the major interest and that the focus should be the more fundamental processes of which the activities of the societies were a manifestation. My concern in this study is with these; the practical problems of village

societies viewed as tools of development will be dealt with elsewhere.

My work in the village covered a long period. It began in November 1963 with a survey, the purpose of which was to pick out the individuals who participated in village affairs and to relate their participation to various attributes. During 1964 I followed up the data provided by the survey in the course of short, and at times infrequent, visits. In most of 1965 and 1966 I lived in the village for about ten days in each month. In 1967 I found myself reduced again to short visits. The fieldwork was completed with a continuous spell from January to September 1968. The disadvantages of distributing fieldwork time in this way are obvious. Its one advantage was that I was able to keep the village under scrutiny for a much longer period than is usual.

In selecting a village for a study of this type the notion of typicality inevitably presents itself. It did not take long, however, to demonstrate that in a Ceylon context this has meaning only in a travelogue sense. But the administrative desire for a typical village had to be taken into account - the need to make results widely applicable. It seemed sensible therefore to choose a village which would yield a sizable crop of problems around the main issues. It was hoped that this would make the analysis sufficiently comprehensive for it to be applied, if not to the whole of the Sinhalese sector of

Ceylon, at least to the thickly populated south-western part of the wet zone. For this reason the village had to be one which was not too far from a market town which was preferably in a district near Colombo. It was also desirable that the government's schemes of development should have been operating there for some time and that substantial educational facilities should have been available during the last twenty five years. The influence of the plantation economy was another factor which was to be looked for. In such a situation landlessness was likely to be a problem and unemployment would be high.

The village finally chosen was Remuna, near the town of Horana, thirty miles south-east of Colombo. (Please see map.) It is on the periphery of that area of the country which has been most exposed to urban influence, and as such it is different in many respects from the Ceylon villages which have figured thus far in anthropological literature.[2] The region in which Remuna is situated is best known for the high yield of its rubber, and it has at various times enjoyed considerable prosperity. Of late this prosperity has been somewhat threatened owing to the drop in world prices for natural rubber, but this has affected the owner of the large plantation much more than the small-holder.

Paddy fields and the village tank mark Remuna off quite clearly from the villages that surround it. It

is somewhat larger than the rest, not so much in extent, which is about a square mile, as in the size of its population which is over 2,000. Paddy fields take up a third of the village area, while a rubber plantation accounts for a sixth. This means that the residential areas, the bazaar, small-holdings of rubber, and vegetable and other plots are confined to half a square mile or a little over 300 acres. Parts of the village are every bit as crowded as a city.

All villages in the Sinhalese sector of the country are not populated solely by Sinhalese. Tamils and Muslims are frequently part of the village population, particularly in this region. Remuna, however, is entirely Sinhalese, with the single exception of a Tamil barber.

The largest caste in the village (80%) is the Goigama - traditionally farmers. Then there is the Vahumpura (15%) who are also associated with the land. Jaggery-making was an occupation which had a special connection with this caste, but the Vahumpura in Remuna have all but given it up now. The other two castes are the Berawa (drummers and dancers) and the Radaw (washermen). The Vahumpura have three neighbourhoods to themselves while the Berawa are concentrated in two pockets. The Radaw are scattered. It is only in the forest reserve which the government has released from time to time to relieve the pressure on land, that the four castes intermingle.

All of Remuna is Buddhist; there is neither church, mosque, nor Hindu kovil for some miles around. There are two temples in the village, the larger of which is in theory open to all castes. Few Vahumpura, however, patronise this temple; they go instead to the smaller one which was founded by them about fifty years ago as the result of a dispute over a temple ceremony. The breach has now been healed to a considerable extent and the temples co-operate with each other when the necessity arises. Buddhism is, of course, only a part of a wider complex of belief and practice. There are many other religious practitioners besides the monks in the temples.

There is much occupational diversity in Remuna. A fair proportion of people work outside the village, some commuting to Colombo. This is possible because a very adequate bus service connects Remuna with Horana, three miles away. Colombo and Panadura are easily reached from there. In the other direction there is a direct bus link with Kalutara which is the district capital. The administrative centre of the division within this district in which Remuna lies is at Horana. Such a division is divided into about fifty units, for each of which an official called the Grama Sevaka is responsible. In the unit to which it belongs, Remuna is grouped together with the two villages which lie to the north and to the west of it.

Most contacts are with Horana. The bigger schools

are there as are the law courts and the Central Hospital. Important purchases are usually made at Horana even when these items are readily available at the same price in Remuna's own small bazaar.

II The History of the Village

The people of Remuna think of their village as having a long history and, indeed there is a reference in the Mahavamsa[3] to a place with a similar name. It is said to be the place at which a famous battle was fought in the 11th Century. In terms of the other details of the account this view is not untenable; the area certainly was occupied well before that, as a famous inscription at nearby Pokunuvita makes clear. Scattered archaeological remains also support the view of a long history.

With Dutch times, beginning in the second half of the seventeenth century, records are much fuller. The Raigam Korale[4] was an important area and the scene of many battles. The Dutch had a fort at Anguruwatota, four miles from Remuna and descriptions of it are to be found in the records of the time as well as in travellers' accounts.

Remuna is mentioned almost from the time British records for the area begin, in the middle of the last century. However, nothing of note seems to have distinguished it from scores of other villages in the district, for administrative comment (as far as I have been able to ascertain)

is largely absent.

Although no documents of any great interest are available which describe Remuna as it was sixty and more years ago, it is possible through the reminiscences of elders to reconstruct the way in which it became gradually involved in a wider economy. At the turn of the century the population was very much less than what it is now. Fifteen houses are supposed to have occupied an area where there are nearly ninety now; this is consistent with the national increase over this period. Pressure on the land was non-existent. There were large tracts of Crown land, mainly forest, and small extents were alienated to villagers as need arose. Except for a few craftsmen working within the traditional mould, all the rest were farmers -- cultivators of paddy during the season and of vegetables and betel at other times. Food was produced mainly for the village's own consumption and the diet was supplemented by what the forest yielded - game, fruits, yams and so on. There does not seem to have been any shortage of food, but two meals of rice a day was not usual as it is now. The inflow of cash into the village was very limited; such little as came in was through the sale of betel (and to a lesser extent of vegetables) at the weekly village fairs in townships along the Colombo and Kalutara roads.

The uses of money were also limited. The building

and equipping of houses required no cash expenditure; implements and utensils were obtained through barter. Almost all the food required was produced by the domestic unit. Dress was one of the major items of expenditure.

Life was lived very much within the village and its neighbourhood. Colombo and Kalutara were reached either by bullock cart or by river transport, but few people had occasion to go that far. The wants of the village were met through the enterprise of a few shop-keepers and itinerant traders. Pilgrimages were the only long journeys undertaken. The four day trek to Adam's Peak[5] (which can be seen from the village on a clear day) was more popular than the one to Anuradhapura, which only the more affluent had the means to undertake.

Remuna had no school at this time. Initial instruction was at the temple and for those who wanted a little more, the school of the area was on the Horana Road about two miles away. Education was not avidly sought and few were aware of its benefits. As a result hardly anyone from the village was in a position to compete for such government posts as village teacher.

Police posts and stations were few and far between. The ones that existed were unable to cope effectively with their large beats. The maintenance of law and order in a village had inevitably to be left to its headman, who was expected to run the village with the minimum of trouble to the administration. Justice was

dealt out summarily by him and this was usually upheld. All administrative matters - usually relating to land and revenue - were attended to by him. He had by far the highest cash income in the village, so that he was the pivot around which power and authority revolved.

One of the earliest events to change this state of affairs - a state which probably existed during the last three decades or so of the 19th Century - was the leasing of village land around 1908 to a British company for the purposes of rubber growing. Village labour under the control of village contractors was recruited for the many preliminary tasks and money in village hands became plentiful in comparison with earlier times. When the trees were ready for tapping, Tamil immigrant labour was brought in for the purpose. Whatever may have been the motive for this move, it is clear that the village at that stage could not have supplied all the labour necessary. In fact, as far as the village population was concerned the rubber plantation continued for a few years to be a profitable source of work and income, for there was much work besides the actual tapping. The influx of the Tamil group also promoted the village economy in two ways. Food crops were now grown so that the produce could be sold to them and the opportunities

for general trade increased.

In tracing the changes which occurred in the thirty years that followed, four factors seem to be of particular importance: the realization of the advantages of education; the new pattern of transport; the constitutional changes of 1931 and the changes that followed from them; and the increasing difficulty which the village experienced with regard to land.

At this time, the increasing contact with peri-urban areas and the changes taking place there would have made the more ambitious of Remuna households aware of the advantages of a salaried occupation under government. Unless one was prepared to leave the village, teaching was the only avenue open. This preference was consolidated through the policy of educational expansion which the government is supposed to have followed at this time. More schools were established (though none at Remuna), existing ones were improved and schemes of inspection were introduced. Teaching became a very desirable occupation (and has remained so to this day). The wider aspect of this was that the old attitude, which was one of indifference to the value of an education, gave way to another in which parents encouraged, even urged, children to continue with their schooling, even though prospects of employment were limited in the

individual case. Remuna began to provide a few teachers as well as others who filled various minor grades in the government service. By the end of the period which I am now discussing, this had become the ambition of everybody with any scholastic ability; and attending the bigger schools in Horana to develop this ability was considered something for which no parental sacrifice was too great.

Buses first began to ply on the roads in the area in about 1918, and its immediate consequence was that Colombo became more accessible. The existing forms of transport were badly hit and the river service ultimately disappeared altogether. But the volume of trade increased. More things were taken to Colombo and sold there, while more consumer goods became available in the village. (The buses of the time had a large goods compartment.) The number of pingo-bearers[6] who came in to Colombo probably increased markedly at this time.

The system of road transport which prevailed at this time permitted individual operators to run their buses on the routes of their choice, and many small capitalists went into this business. One from Remuna too purchased a bus as did some others from neighbouring villages. As competition between rival operators was fierce, the bus crews were selected, not on the basis of any mechanical or navigational skill, but because of a reputation for thuggery. This gave the opportunity for a few people from

the poorer sectors of the village to reach levels of income which had not until then been possible.

In 1931 Ceylon was given a new constitution, a feature of which was universal franchise.[7] In its wake came other changes. Local Government was given a certain emphasis and in the rural areas elected bodies called Village Committees were set up. A new personality, the Village Committee Member thus appeared on the scene.

There were also changes in the district administration. Until then the chief administrative officer in a district was the Government Agent and divisions within the district were controlled by a Mudaliyar to whom the Village Headman was directly responsible. The Mudaliyar was chosen on account of the standing of his family and the influence which he is supposed to have wielded rather than for any academic or administrative ability. The anecdotes of the time usually represent him as being devoid of both, but possessing enough cunning and shrewdness to exploit his office to maximum personal advantage. In the new scheme the Mudaliyar was replaced by a Divisional Revenue Officer, a professional administrator who was recruited primarily on the basis of his performance at an examination. He was, unlike the Mudaliyar, transferable and, as far as the village was concerned the intention was that he would be a much more effective check on the headman.

The franchise brought the village into a wider orbit of activity. It participated, along with the other villages of the constituency, in electing a member to the Legislative Assembly. There was now something which it was in the power of the village to give and in Remuna (as elsewhere in the area) the realization came very soon, that this brought with it a concommitant - the power to demand. Village endeavours, such as a weaving centre which began in the mid-thirties, are to be seen as an expression of this new strength. Village leaders or would-be leaders now had contacts through whom government assistance could be channelled into the village. It is easy to see that this made for realignments, subtle at first, in the power situation of the village.

The rate of increase in the population was such, that if in 1900 a man in these areas had twice the land that he could conveniently farm, by the mid-thirties he had only two-thirds of it. The 'land problem' had begun and the government was forced to release land from the reserves. The village seems to have realized at about this time, and the notion has hardened ever since, that such advancement as it desired could not come through agriculture but through education.

There is another aspect to the problem of land. As early as 1920 peasants had begun planting rubber in small-holdings. Rubber being the type of permanent crop that it is, the result was an increase in the extent

of land which the individual could look after. And when there was a squeeze on the land it was vegetable cultivation that was edged out. This worked well enough for a time, the comparative security of rubber replacing (in the eyes of the village) the precariousness of vegetable cultivation. However, when the depression came and the price of rubber took a sharp dive, the peasant found himself without either rubber or free land to try whatever else might have been profitable at that time. Added to this was the difficulty that work on the plantation came to a virtual halt.

Much that began in the earlier period continued with accelerated tempo after the war and particularly after independence in 1948. Communications improved, educational opportunities widened, the state and the village came into much closer contact and many more items were added to the list of village necessities. However, there has been little, if any, increase in the productive output of the village, except in terms of an education which fits the youth of the village for little that the country has to offer.

During, and just after the war, there was agitation for the establishment of a school in the village. The main problem was a suitable site and a small group of people who were spearheading the campaign attempted to persuade the owners of contiguous blocks in a particular

area to lease their lands for this purpose. Another group, headed it is said by the headman of the time, endeavoured apparently to disturb these negotiations, but were in the end unsuccessful. On the eve of the General Election of 1947, the land was obtained, temporary buildings were erected and the government released funds for the staffing and equipping of the school. The acquisition of a junior education became more convenient.

The numbers who did not stop at this level, but went on to the senior schools at Horana, increased progressively. Until the mid-fifties such an education usually led to suitable urban or state employment. Thereafter, unemployment among those who had had a secondary school education with a bias towards the humanities, mounted very rapidly. Remuna has had to take its share of this country-wide phenomenon. Still, the quantum of employment which the village has managed to obtain has been sufficient for this to have a decisive effect on the alignments of power.

The awareness of the claims which the village has on the politicians has increased markedly after the General Election of 1956 in which the Sri Lanka Freedom Party won a landslide victory. It is no longer helpless in the face of governmental authority. The Member of Parliament and district politicians are personalities who are well-known in and accessible to, the village. Their intervention is frequently sought in the dealings which the

village has with the district administration although it is recognised that the effectiveness of this is dependent on whether or not the Member of Parliament is a member of the governing party. Despite this general attitude to politics and politicians, branches of political parties do not enjoy a virile existence in Remuna. They come alive at election time only to wither away thereafter.

In the face of such changes it was inevitable that the headman would have to go. He has been replaced by a Grama Sevaka who performs substantially the same duties but who is recruited on the basis of an examination and who functions like the Divisional Revenue Officer within a transferable service. The attempt has been to remove from this office the overtones of police authority which the office of headman had.

This was part of a shift in administrative emphasis which had begun earlier. Prior to independence, the village was dealt with by the district administration through the divisional office, which in turn used the headman as its contact in the village. Central government agencies had to use this devious route if it wanted anything done at the village level with the added disadvantage that its scheme or message would be presented to the village by officials who may or may not have been sympathetic to it.

After 1948 it was felt that the pace of development demanded a more dynamic and responsive structure. Government agencies have chosen one of two forms. Some decided to work through a field officer who had as his area a unit of five or six villages. It is in this way that agricultural schemes such as the use of fertilizer, the introduction of new varieties of paddy, ventures in animal husbandry and new cash crops have been introduced into the village. So also new practices in health and sanitation. Others decided to encourage villages to set up societies which would work in partnership with them. These were seen as pools in which government assistance would mingle with and stimulate village endeavour. The Rural Development Society and the Co-operative Society are the results of this approach.

The other important influence in Remuna in recent times has been the Paddy Lands Act.[8] Its intention was the complete overhaul of paddy cultivation. Before this Act, in Remuna as elsewhere, the coordination and control of the different activities connected with this form of cultivation was the responsibility of the Vel Vidane. Disputes about rights were settled by him and he was expected through his authority to coerce people into the proper performance of their allotted tasks. The Vel Vidane was a government appointee, selected from among the important families in the village. He received no salary but each cultivator gave him a small share of his

produce. The Act replaced the Vel Vidane with an elected Cultivation Committee which was supported by a part-time secretary whom this committee could select.

III The Village Today

I shall now describe very briefly certain aspects of Remuna society by way of providing a background for the four chapters that follow.

During the last twenty years the shortage of land has become very acute and rights in land are jealously guarded. Disputes over land are the cause of much litigation, in some instances the costs of doing so exceeding the value of the land disputed. Urban lawyers often find this behaviour inexplicable though, possibly, not undesirable. The complexities of land use and ownership in rural Ceylon have been amply demonstrated in recent writings; Remuna is no exception.

The land[9] provides the greater part of their income for very nearly half the people - either through ownership, direct labour or through supplying the other services associated with agriculture. Land is thought of as isthira depola - safe, and it is hoped, unalterable, capital. People are often categorised in terms of their land interests and phrases such as "those who work the fields together" and "those who eat one inheritance" are often heard.

The inheritance of land in Remuna is governed by the laws of the country without regional or ethnic modification. The central principle is that children inherit equally irrespective of sex. When a parent dies intestate, in the first instance, half the property goes to the surviving parent and the other half is divided among the children. Eventually should this parent too die intestate this half of the property is shared in a similar way. There are now no major conflicts between these legal stipulations and Remuna concepts of inheritance. There is, though, the notion among those who hold more 'traditional' values that daughters who marry out of the village should have no share of the land. However, the number of instances when Remuna has had to take cognisance of this aspect of the law have been sufficiently numerous for it to be recognised clearly that daughters in such situations do have exercisable rights which are, at the very least, weapons in special situations. This apart it might be expected that the law would work fairly smoothly. In actual practice the exercise of land rights is far from clear-cut and the problems of doing so in relation to high land are different to those presented by paddy land.

The simple fact about land is that, while the extent available to the village remains virtually static, the population rises at a marked rate. (My estimate is that the population today is more than six times what

it was at the turn of the century.) With every generation then the size of the average individual holding decreases, reducing the potential of the land to provide an adequate income. What has happened in the case of paddy land?

It is the belief in the village that it is uneconomic to cultivate fields which are below a certain minimum size. When this minimum is reached instead of making the division on the ground it is made in terms of time. That is, if a plot is inherited by A and B it is cultivated by them in alternate years. Then if A has two sons, A1 and A2, and B has three sons, B1, B2 and B3, A1 and A2 will each have the field every four years, while B1, B2 and B3 will each have it every six years. It is easy to see that a field could very easily be at a stage when a coparcener gets his turn once every forty years. At times fields are sold when this happens and the reverse process of consolidation takes place. In general, however, fragmented fields are the order, and in one particular instance the cycle takes as much as eighty years to complete.

The system is termed thattumaru[10] and the records of shares and their inheritance are maintained in the Thattumaru Book by the Cultivation Committee. A variant of the system occurs when A and B inherit a field which is large enough for division but in which the different areas are of unequal productivity. In such a situation

a freehold division might not be made; the field might instead be divided into two plots and each of them will work each of the plots in alternate years. This arrangement is termed kattimaru.

This is a somewhat idealised picture in the sense that it is clear that many fields were not in fact divided at a minimum point in this peaceful, mathematical way. As extents grew smaller there were conflicts centring around the way in which a group of brothers worked their fields and shared their income. One brother might want to divide and another would oppose this. The question would arise as to who would work the field first in the event of a thattumaru division. All this would take place against the background of the view that relationships of co-operation and amity should exist between brothers.

It is clear that the agricultural factor of minimum extent was not always the feature which determined division. A group of brothers might start out in a spirit of co-operation, friction would develop and a thattumaru division would be a convenient and satisfactory way of resolving the conflict. But by itself it would have been of little avail against the tensions created by a shortage of land if not for the fact that there was at this time an increasing desire for a cash income. Paddy could not provide this in the way that extra-village employment could and this was the direction of effort. In this context

the thattumaru system has worked as a device which maintained a satisfactory balance between the paddy land available and the desire for it. The present position is that there are thattumaru arrangements in all but a few fields and it is the accepted way of dealing with small extents. As will be seen conflicts over paddy land are less numerous and much less acrimonious than over high land.

The position in relation to high land is different in many respects. When a property is inherited by a set of brothers it is seldom divided. A legal partition is costly and even when finances permit this is considered a misuse of resources. For most people the costs of such an action are prohibitive. Apart from this even a non-legal division in the form of fencing the property into the required number of shares is seldom contemplated. As mentioned earlier this is the wrong way to behave and is a reflection on the family. To demand division is to isolate oneself; it is a refusal to enter into a system of reciprocal services. The demand is seldom made unless the isolation has already occurred in the form of increased income. Unlike the division of paddy land which is emphasised only at particular times such as sowing and harvesting, a high land division manifests itself in, and is reinforced by, several every day incidents. By and large then this view regarding division is still stressed even though

employment and the resulting differences of incomes between brothers tends to bring it somewhat under attack.

What happens as time goes on? Two hypothetical examples will illustrate some of the possibilities. Suppose a man has three sons, C, D and E, and they inherit his block of land. Each of them resides in the block and have one, two and three children respectively (C1, D1 and D2, E1, E2 and E3). When these six also set up house in the same block, the conflicts that are likely to arise will have at their root a simple fact. While there are six people resident in the block their shares are very different. C1 has a third, D1 and D2 have a sixth while E1, E2 and E3 have only a ninth each. From the point of view of C1, unless he is particularly vigi-land the block is likely to find equilibrium at a point when all six enjoy it more or less equally, thereby reducing his share by half. If he is determined to enjoy his rightful share he will probably be criticised by the others as being grasping in a situation of insuffi-cient land.

The problems become even more complicated when two blocks are involved. Suppose that a man has two equal blocks of land in one of which he lives with his five sons, J, K, L, M and N. The sons set up house in this way: J and K remain in the original block while L, M and N go to the second one. Now let us suppose that the situation in the third generation is as follows:

J and K between them have three sons and two daughters, all of whom are resident in block one. In the other block, L has died without issue, M's two daughters and N's daughter have married out of the village, and the only residents in the block are M's son and N's son. The end result is that there are five resident in the first block while there are only two in the second. Then, if it is only those who are actually in the block who enjoy its produce, there is obvious discrepancy between legal share and the share that is enjoyed. Those in the first block will now think of their legal rights and attempt to gain a foothold in the second which is the point at which disputes usually begin.

These two situations are much less complicated than most realities though the general pattern is as it is illustrated by them. As shares get less tensions increase. There are complaints that others have managed to get better parts of the block or that they are enjoying an area in excess of their rightful share. All this breaks out in conflicts of various types and a partition action begins to be spoken of as a solution.

The different steps available to those in situations of this type will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter, but two points of contrast with paddy land might be mentioned at this stage. The first is that there is no external reason such as the minimum size of a unit of cultivation which forces high land division. The second point is that a rotational system

is seldom workable. It is of course impossible when residence is involved but is practised in a few instances in blocks which are under rubber, vegetables or coconut. Except perhaps in the case of vegetables the difficulty is the one of having some precision, as in paddy, in relating input to return.

The examples discussed above would have indicated that conflicts over land rights are often between siblings and the children of siblings. In the older part of the village where people have been resident for much longer a wider group is involved - the members of a patronymic group or a distinct branch of such a group. Where there has been intra-village marriage two or more patronymic groups may be involved. Thus the present state of shares is an indication of the history of marriage and it is possible in these terms to examine the claim of a patronymic group X that it contracted no marriages with patronymic group Y. The other inference that can be drawn from the way in which shares are distributed is the relative antiquity of the different patronymic groups. Those whose migration into the village has been recent and whose affluence has been insufficient for the purchase of much land tend to have all their land in one area of the village, probably in one block.

The point that I have tried to stress in this preliminary picture of land in Remuna is that the inheritance of rights does not guarantee that they can be

exercised. Conflicts arise in situations of coparcenership.[11] It is not surprising then to find that the owners of niravul (literally, "disentangled") land as opposed to havul (shared) land, described above, are much envied. So are those who have sinnakkara (freehold) paddy fields as against thattumaru ones. Such people need not engage in preliminary disputes which have to clear the way before they can enjoy their high land. They have the uninterrupted use of their fields and have sufficient paddy at all times. This happy situation is the result either of belonging to a long line of landowners or of purchase and consolidation which a large income has made possible. In either case to possess such lands is an attribute which contributes greatly to high status.

The Remuna economy is not bounded by land - occupations and ways of earning a living are many and varied. An important category are those whom I shall call the landowners. A few of them do engage in business activities but they derive the major part of their income through the ownership of land. The distinguishing characteristic is that unlike the others they do no work on it themselves.[12]

There are about twenty teachers. Most of them work in secondary schools which are within a radius of

fifteen miles from Remuna and travel to these daily from the village. Some of them are graduates and many of the others have been through Teacher Training College. Similar to them in level of income are those who work in government institutions and in the larger commercial establishments, either in the lower clerical or labour grades. They too travel daily to their places of work which may be in Horana, Kalutara or Colombo. The other important group who work outside the village are the transport workers who are employed by the Transport Board as bus conductors and drivers or by private road transport companies.

Others work in the village. The shopkeepers vary considerably in income; while a few approach the higher levels of income, the small kiosks of others just about pay their way. The sellers of coconut toddy and of other alcoholic brews pursue a profitable but risky occupation, for these activities are prohibited by law. Associated with the complex of non-Buddhist beliefs are the different types of ritual practitioners; the skills of some of them are caste specialities. There are two ayurvedic physicians in the village.

Carpenters and masons do most of their work in Remuna itself but go out to neighbouring villages when the opportunity offers. The carters provide the cheapest form of transport - their services are needed to carry goods to and from H orana and also for the transport of

paddy and coconuts within the village.

The occupation of the majority would have to be described as 'mixed', that is, they do some cultivation as a tenant or in association with a tenant, they work their own limited extents of land and their services are available as unskilled labour or as rubber tappers. The full-time farmer, who does paddy cultivation during the season and who devotes himself completely to high land cultivation at other times, has all but disappeared. It should be noted that paddy cultivation is nobody's "occupation". When the season comes round all those who have land, except for the landowners and a few others, will get into the field for three or four days of work.

The women engage, somewhat half-heartedly, in crafts of various sorts - principally mat-weaving, basketry and textile-weaving on handloom. The youth of both sexes work as beedi-wrappers.[13]

A high proportion of people in the age group of eighteen to twenty-five have no occupation at all. Many of them have reached a standard of education which is the equivalent of 'O' levels in this country, and there are also five graduates in this group. The village has no work to offer them and the state of unemployment in the country is such that they cannot find jobs elsewhere.

In Goigama theory all Vahumpura people are below all Goigama people in status, with the Radaw and Berawa

below them. The Goigama are not always clear about the relative ranking of the two latter castes and it is not pressed by them either. However, Goigama individuals often concede that some among them have now fallen below the Vahumpura and are rapidly approaching the status of the Radaw and the Berawa.

Remuna is not a village which is characterised by strong inter-caste conflicts which break out into violence. The potential is there and such conflicts have surfaced at various times during the last fifty years. At present though, the situation is one of comparative peace, with avoidance as the key note. There is some evidence to support the Vahumpura view that the northern part of the village was originally theirs. They claim that the Goigama who now live in this part migrated into it, either from the southern part or from outside, and that their lands passed into Goigama hands through transactions which were highly disadvantageous to them. The percentage of the landless who have been forced to seek government land is higher among them than among the Goigama, although from the viewpoint of individual holdings, the Vahumpura average is not appreciably lower than that of the Goigama. Vahumpura losses have been most pronounced in paddy land and they would like to be accepted as tenant-cultivators by the Goigama. In view of the shortage of such land the Goigama do not need to do this. It is, therefore, even more imperative for the Vahumpura

to acquire new skills and obtain external employment. They have the same range of occupational variation as the Goigama but this is much less than what they desire.

The Berawa and the Radaw have little to do with the land. Some of them follow their traditional occupations. Others have trained themselves in various crafts and find their custom outside the village rather than inside it. Every family in these two castes can trace its descent to an ancestor who came to Remuna during the last seventy-five years, at the request of, and under the protection of a patron - usually Goigama, but occasionally Vahumpura. The descendants on both sides generally continue to maintain the connection.

A minority caste in this type of setting has one of four approaches open to it:

1) It can perform the role assigned to it by the majority caste with all the excellence that it can command. Economic rewards are the benefits of such an approach.

2) It can merely accept this role and wait until times are propitious to change the situation. This would provoke the majority caste into some hostility and the period may be one of economic difficulty.

3) It can fight immediately for a new order. Unless its internal strengths are very strong despite numerical weakness and unless it has strong external support, such a move has little chance of success.

4) It can migrate, either to an area in which it is strong or it can attempt to hide its caste antecedents in the anonymity of an urban setting.

It will, I hope, become apparent in the chapters which follow why it is that in Remuna the minority castes do not follow any one of these approaches exclusively.

Kinship in rural Sinhalese society has received much attention at the hands of anthropologists; there is little need for detailed introductory comments. The domestic unit is generally the nuclear family but there are variants. Parents of the husband or of the wife, unmarried brothers and sisters of either, married children and their spouses - all these could enlarge the unit.

The Sinhalese have ge (literally: house) names which pass from father to son and daughter. Those who have a common ge name are regarded as having been descended from a common ancestor, but when the group is large, it is not possible for every member to indicate his precise kinship connection with every other member even though they may be residents in the same village. In this part of the country these patronymic groups are confined to a group of neighbouring villages or at times even to a single village. In Remuna there are thirty such groups among the Goigama and about a dozen among the Vahumpura.

Patronymic groups cannot be said to exhibit a corporate character; as a group it has no land or other rights nor does it have any formal leaders. It does not come together as a body for any specific purpose and it

does not unite in any action which appears to threaten a common interest. Those who belong to the smaller patronymic groups tend to live in the same neighbourhood, often in adjacent blocks. The usual inference is that their migration to the village has been recent. In such circumstances cohesion and sentiment are greater than otherwise and the group is more readily identified by the rest of the village. This diminishes with dispersal but the solidarity is maintained if, among the group, there are patrons around whom the others can cluster.

Patronymic groups are ranked although not very definitively. A group which receives a high ranking will have a good 'history'. The families who compose it will have held their lands for as long as is relevant to village memory and they would have demonstrated their strength by making desirable inter-village marriages. The group would count distinguished people among its members. From an individual's point of view the ranking of his group is important in the context of marriage for, as we shall see, a good 'name' is a constituent of his overall status. But he can use this as a positive attribute only if this gives him an advantage. Thus if a group has a good ranking its cohesion tends to be greater; those who belong to it are anxious to claim its membership.

There is little doubt or vagueness about a patronymic group - its composition is easily determined

and an individual can belong to only one such group. "Our people" is a circle with the individual at the centre. It has no defined limits and the radius of the circle varies from person to person. Co-members of the patronymic group are usually, but not always, within it. Such a circle relates to land rights which are held in common (i.e. shares in the same block or field) and does therefore include maternal kinsmen.

Also of interest is what I shall call the family circle - a group of four or five families which enjoy a particularly close relationship expressed in reciprocal help and co-operation. Each family could be linked with the others through either parent so that this is not a part of a patronymic group. The linking parents are usually either siblings or children of siblings.

The point that should be emphasised is that different people activate their kinship links in different ways. There are those who have a strong allegiance to the patronymic group. 'Our people' is more significant for others. Some neglect both these and treat the family circle as their most important kinship unit. And there are also people who play down all their kinship connections and emphasise their economic and political links.

Remuna has few economic contacts with the other villages of the region; the contacts are mainly those of marriage. A good marriage is one in which the spouse is from another village. It is of the <u>diga</u> rather than the

binna form, that is, the woman should come to reside in the man's village rather than the other way about. In a good marriage a dowry is given and the festivities are conducted according to accepted custom. It brings with it useful external contacts and in general raises the standing of the family.

The importance of its different societies in the life of the village will become apparent in later chapters. Apart from the Government-sponsored societies it has several of its own and the idea of using the societies as 'political' instruments has been firmly established. In this emphasis the village has often deviated from the type of goal which the government had in mind for the societies that it promoted. The vicissitudes of these societies can at times be related to the fortunes of the government agencies with which they are associated. Most often, however, they are the result of internal factors.

After a quiet start village societies have become arenas of conflict. Government aid, given to the village through these organisations, has increased over the years and the village has now realized the full potential of the societies. Besides the economic aspect, they are also avenues through which the village can meet the administration at an 'official' level - a privilege previously enjoyed only by the headman. The control of societies is

therefore desirable and those who aspire to this must have popular support.

IV The Problem

Earlier in this chapter I spoke of a shift of emphasis away from the village societies to more fundamental processes in the society. It is time now to state my problem more clearly.

An examination of the problems faced by planners and administrators at the village level revealed that there were basically two types of difficulties which they had encountered. There was the failure of incentives to stimulate production and there was the failure of organisations to achieve given objectives through co-operative effort. Two initial areas of interest were indicated by this; the study would have to concern itself with the bases of power and leadership as well as with the village view of mobility. Further, the analysis of power appeared to require a careful delineation of the resources of the village.

It is out of this background that the problem emerged in its final form:

> What are the resources available to the community?
>
> What norms and values control their use and distribution?
>
> What is the rationale of this system?

In the course of examining these three questions I expect to show how power is distributed within the community, how it relates to leadership and how both are bound up with status and mobility.

Thathwaya is the pervading concept of Remuna society. 'Status' is its almost exact English equivalent. It is in terms of thathwaya that the people of Remuna see themselves in relation to each other. In the final chapter I shall examine status in some detail and do not wish to anticipate that here except to say that status is the summation of a series of attributes. I should emphasise that whenever I use status it is to thathwaya that I refer.

I define resources broadly as a source of income. In the next four chapters I shall examine the different types of resources to which the village has access - either collectively or as individuals. In doing so I have certain concerns in mind: how is each resource viewed by the community? What are its advantages? To whom is it available? What are the conflicts which result through the attempts to control it? In the final chapter I hope to demonstrate why the community handles its resources in the way that it does.

Footnotes to Chapter One

1 The results of these studies are available only in unpublished reports.

2 See Leach (1961); Tambiah (1958); Obeysekere (1967); Yalman (1967).

3 This is one of the chronicles of the Sinhalese.

4 One of the administrative divisions during the time of the Sinhalese monarchy. It included the area in which Remuna is situated.

5 A mountain venerated by the Buddhists of Ceylon.

6 A pingo is rather like a pair of scales. Goods are carried in baskets suspended at the two ends of a connecting pole which is slung across the bearer's shoulder. This method is popular with house-to-house traders who come into Colombo and other urban centres from the surrounding rural areas.

7 Prior to this time the vote was limited by qualifications of education and wealth.

8 This is discussed more fully in the next chapter.

9 As in most rice-growing areas of the world land is of two types. Paddy land is low-lying land which can be easily muddied and irrigated and which has been specially prepared for paddy cultivation. High land is the balance.

10 See Obeysekere (1967 - p.35) for a different usage.

11 I use the word 'coparcenership' in its accepted anthropological sense. At times the word 'ownership' is used to cover both ownership proper as well as coparcenery rights.

12 Anybody who owns more than five acres of land approaches the position of a landowner.

13 A beedi is a cross between a cigar and cigarette. It is much smaller than a cigarette and costs about a sixth of it.

14 The large number of such groups does in itself indicate substantial migration into the village. Some of these groups are found only in Remuna and this would appear to support a view held in the village that they effected a caste change on arrival in the village by changing their patronymic. The suggestion is that they originally belonged to castes whose standing was often lower than that of the Vahumpura. The change has always been to the Goigama.

Chapter Two

LAND

I The Ownership of Paddy Land

I intend in this chapter[1] to examine the two central problems in relation to land - how it is owned and how it is worked. As paddy land and high land differ in each of these respects they will be considered separately.

In the context of paddy land problems are of three broad types. First there is the question of whether a particular individual has the right to enjoy, as he claims, a one-fifth share of a particular field every three years. The second type of problem is the one of internal division. Granted that the members of a family or of a branch of a patronymic group have rights to certain shares in one or more fields, who is to enjoy which share? The third type is division on the field itself. If there are eight shares in the field and if eight people have come forward to cultivate it in a

particular season, who gets which part of the field? The two latter problems do not affect sinnakkara fields. Their ownership may be contested but this too is rare. Such fields are in general fairly large, their histories are well known and they have either been in particular families for some length of time or have changed hands in well authenticated purchases. It is with thattumaru fields therefore that I am largely concerned.

Let me begin with the right to a share. Is the claim to a one-fifth share of the field every three years justified? Is it now being wrongfully enjoyed by somebody else? These are conflicts which appear to arise in one of two ways. They are either the result of a tenancy arrangement solidifying itself into one of coparcenership over time or of a mortgage being treated as if it were a sale. The following cases which were in progress at the time I was in the village illustrate this.

In one of them L.M. William alleged that another party was forcibly enjoying one of his shares. William had taken employment away from the village on several occasions and when his father died the family shares had been given to others to cultivate. When William eventually returned to the village one of these shares had not been given back by the tenant-cultivator concerned who also had a share in the same field. By the time that William got round to enumerating his different shares, several years had elapsed, the original tenant-cultivator

had died, and his sons were working the field. They claimed that they were the coparceners.

In the other case, a group of kinsmen led by Diyonis were having a long drawn out battle with Jayasundere in which they claimed that one set of fields which Jayasundere claimed as his were, at the most, mortgaged by their family to Jayasundere's family two generations ago. The latter's argument was that they had been acquired by purchase and that he had the deeds to prove it.

Disputes of this type can seldom be settled either by the disputants themselves or by mediators. They stem from transactions made in previous generations and each side is convinced of the legality of its inherited right. Force, in the form of forcible cultivation, is useful where it is possible, not so much as a method of final settlement but as a means of making opponents back down from too intransigent a position. However, the majority of the disputes have finally to be placed before the Cultivation Committee.

The ability to influence the Committee is important, particularly in disputes which are too small in scale to reach the courts. If on the other hand one of the disputants is ready to incur the costs of litigation the major effect of an inquiry by the Cultivation Committee is one of delay. In cases of this type the Committee tends to be careful, however hostile it may feel towards one of the protagonists.

The many ways in which the Committee can be influenced will be discussed more fully in a later chapter. For the moment it may be noted that this aspect of its work is a source of considerable patronage to the Committee.

When compared with high land, disputes over rights in paddy land are limited. Over a four-year period complaints to the Cultivation Committee did not average more than twelve per year. There is, as I shall explain shortly, a special importance attaching to the ownership of paddy land. However, when an individual's shares go down in number and diminish in size he generally feels that paddy has no longer any economic importance for him and further that it is somewhat ridiculous to regard himself any more as an owner of paddy land. When this happens there is a tendency not to push his rights to their limit. The other reason for the limited number of disputes is that the question of shares comes up every year. There is a periodic affirmation of rights and the vigilance which is vital if high land interests are to be protected is not quite as necessary here.

The second problem in relation to rights in paddy land is what I have earlier described as internal division. Suppose that a family of three brothers has a small share in a field, amounting to 1/10th of an acre

which they get once in two years. In the years in which they have it they could each cultivate 1/30th of an acre. To do this it would very probably he necessary to split a plot. A field is divided by small ridges into plots and as these are water-using units they are not split except under very special circumstances. Although plots vary in size there are seldom more than twelve or fifteen to an acre. The usual practice, therefore, would be for the three brothers to take it in turns.

There are other possibilities. One or two of them may be temporarily absent from the village, and, even if all are resident, only one of them may be a cultivator. In these circumstances the one who works the share will give ground shares[2] to the others. Or it may be that the share turns up once every eight years instead of once in two years. It is then too small to be of real concern and there will be little attempt to take it in turns. The first one who indicates that he would like to work the field is usually given the chance to do so.

When the inheritance is large, a different approach is adopted. This is best explained through the case of H.S. Charlis and his two brothers. Charlis's part of the inheritance, which is as follows, indicates the type of division which has been made: he has shares in three fields which turn up every six years or so, his brothers taking similar shares in other fields. In six fields

the family share is divided into two and Charlis shares four of them with either one or the other of his brothers, while in two fields the share is rotated, the brothers taking it in turn. The attempt here has been to divide the shares so that there is equal distribution both in an immediate sense as well as in the long run.

The general principle is that the approach tends to be perfunctory when shares are small, while a substantial inheritance is carefully divided. Broadly, it is possible to say that disputes arise in situations where there is something to dispute about. But they do also occur in families whose shares are limited but who have not as yet thought of income, for one reason or another, in terms of stable, extra-village employment. The accusation may be made that the one who did the cultivation did not give the proper ground share to the others. There is resentment that one who is affluent enough to buy paddy land or shares of his own claims his portion of a small inheritance. Such people may go even further and use their power within the family to make a division which is advantageous to themselves. Factions which have developed in a family in response to other interests could affect the discussion over paddy shares. Some may even decide to work a family share almost forcibly, without the proper consent of the others.

As a general comment it can be said that disputes of this type are not prolonged. Those who are willing

to incur the expenditure of time and money involved in working a share are generally allowed to do so, provided the rights of the others are safeguarded in the form of a ground share. This is a point of contrast between paddy land and high land. There is no permanent crop in paddy land from which an income can be drawn. To get the full value of a share in such land one has to work for it - a seasonal inflow of labour and capital is necessary. When, therefore, one member of a family allows another the right to cultivate a share, what is being given is the right to an income which is at that moment only potential.

The third problem with regard to rights in paddy land is division on the field. Suppose that a family has decided as to who is to have which share in what field and suppose, also, that all the families who have shares in a particular field have done this. Thus the people who are going to work that field for that year have been selected. Who gets which part of the field?

It will be recalled that a field is divided into plots. Wewakumbura is a field of two and a half acres with 26 plots of varying sizes. In one particular year five households had the right to enjoy it and their shares were as follows: 1/4, 3/16, 3/16, 1/8, 1/4. The problem in division is to so divide the total number

of plots into parcels (five in this case) so as to fit the size of the shares. This must be done without dividing the plots. As these are the units in terms of which the inflow and outgo of water is controlled it is difficult for two people to cultivate a single plot, particularly when the varieties of paddy sown have different requirements of water. Viewed as a mathematical problem even this is not easy. All those with an interest in the field know the size and quality of each plot and any solution which is based on trickery is unlikely to succeed. In fact, a precise fit is seldom achieved; give and take is necessary and somebody leaves the field with an advantage, however slight this may be.

If all are adamant conflicts break out and these, though often short could be quite sharp. The final arbiter is the Cultivation Committee. However the instances when complaints are made to it are not numerous for there is an element of disgrace which reflects on all those concerned. Besides, after the harvest the division has to be made quickly and the field prepared for the next sowing. If this is not done everyone stands to lose and the pressure towards compromise is, therefore, great.

I want now to place this discussion in a somewhat wider context. I referred earlier to the special

importance of the ownership of paddy land. Those who have no paddy shares, those who do not go towards the fields at harvest time even to collect a small ground share feel left out of a series of relationships which show themselves in sharpened form at this time. What does this mean in the Remuna idiom?

Everybody, except for the few temporary residents who live in rented houses, owns some high land even if it be a small share in a single block. This has been the situation as far back as anyone can remember, especially in the case of the Goigama and Vahumpura castes. In paddy land the situation is different. At present very nearly twenty-five per cent of the population do not have any paddy shares and the indication is that this percentage was rather higher in 1900 than it is today. Ownership was confined to certain families, who either worked all the land by themselves or else gave out a part of it to tenant-cultivators. The extents were not as large as they are today, and suitable high land was continuously being converted to paddy land. This called for labour but there was no market in which labour was exchanged for cash. It was available only to a leader or a patron and payment took the form of meals while working, and paddy to take away. A spiral was thus created - paddy commanded labour, which in turn produced more paddy. The man who had wealth, the man who had power, was the man who owned paddy. If, then, you have inherited paddy

lands which have been in your family for two or three generations you have a claim to a good genealogy, one of the principal marks of good status.

This is, then, the special importance of paddy land and it is the reason why rights in paddy land are safeguarded even when the economic return from them is minimal. This is done until shares become so small and until wealth and status are so reduced that there is little purpose in claiming good ancestry.

This notion is, however, beginning to weaken. In the context of expenditure people often say, 'we have our little paddy', meaning that this is not an item that they need spend on. It can hardly be denied that this reduces considerable pressure in situations of limited income. But the point is that few people in the village see upward mobility in terms of paddy cultivation. Income obtained in this way is hardly likely to lead to an appreciable rise in status. The rich in the village are no longer rich because they own paddy. Once rich they buy paddy but the major part of their income comes from other sources. The economic importance of paddy has declined but it is still an idiom for the expression of wealth.

This has led to a seemingly paradoxical situation. On the one hand, as has been seen at various points, conflicts over paddy land are fewer than those over high land.[3] They are both limited in incidence and less

prolonged in duration. While residence is important (and most high land disputes are over residential blocks) paddy shares have now reached a point where they have ceased to be a viable economic interest. On the other hand paddy shares fetch very high prices.

The demand aspect has been explained - rich men do buy paddy land. The situation is paradoxical only if it is assumed that as soon as paddy ceases to be of major economic importance to an individual his shares come on the market. If this was the case it would be strange that paddy land fetched high prices because there are many people in this situation - far more sellers than buyers. In fact shares are not offered for sale in this way. If they are small they are no longer exploited in terms of their fullest potential, but they are not sold. To do so would be to go against the values which still apply to paddy land. They are retained and their function thereafter is one which they have always had - insurance against an emergency.

Buying paddy shares is not the best investment that the richer people can make if this is judged from the standpoint of percentage return. In one purchase I calculated that the return was only 4%. This was a sinnakara field but the returns in thattumaru fields are not much higher. The market in shares is very intricate and knowledge and expectancy operate quite as in an urban industrial context. Fine distinctions are drawn between shares of

the same size which are due to turn up at different times after purchase. The quality of the field is a second variable, the nature of the coparceners is a third and so on.

II The Ownership of High Land

Some indication of high land problems have already been given in the last chapter. Viewed historically residence in a block begins without division. In a generation or so it reaches a point, when, in Remuna eyes there are too many people in the block. There is discrepancy between the legal share and the share that is enjoyed and conflicts begin. The general picture (neglecting the small percentage who have niravul lands) is one in which people have shares in the block in which they are resident as well as in other blocks. Similarly, others resident outside have shares in this block. Some of these are women who have married into other villages and men, who for one reason or another, are no longer living in the village. Blocks differ in many respects - in the proportion of coparceners who are resident to those who are not, in the proportion of shares held by resident coparceners to those held by non-resident ones and so on. In one block which had over three hundred coparceners only eight were resident. It is clear that various forces must be keeping this situation in balance.

In relation to high land interests the population can, very broadly, be classified into three categories. First, there are those with niravul lands. Then there are others whose share in their residential block is such that their position is secure. They may in addition have some jungle land,[4] as well as shares in other blocks from which they derive some little return. Their position is regarded as satisfactory. In the third category are people whose position even in their residential blocks is insecure. This is the broad picture. There is much movement between categories two and three. Those who start out from a precarious position may manage to strengthen it through the purchase of shares while others who start out from a stronger position may weaken it through the sale of shares - usually to deal with some contingency or another.

When a couple want to set up house on getting married (perhaps after an initial spell with the man's parents) there are three possible ways of doing this. They could, if they are affluent enough buy a piece of niravul land for the purpose of building a house. More usually though, they will either build in the block in which the man's parents live or else go to a block in which his father (or his mother if she happens to be from Remuna) has a share. The first problem then is to

consider the nature of a block - how its residents are placed in relation to each other, the conflicts that arise and the ways in which these are dealt with.

A resident in a block may be enjoying a share which is larger than, equal to or smaller than, his rightful share. If it is a larger share than is his right how will his co-residents view this? If the residents of a block are united against outsiders the chances are that they will not be too particular as to how the block is divided between them. At times this is no more than to prevent a single non-resident coparcener from taking up residence in the block. Somebody already in the block may be allowed to enjoy a larger share rather than take the risk of another permanent resident in an overcrowded block. Disputes over too large a share are also not very frequent, when there are a large number of resident coparceners in a small block. At this stage the situation is too serious for quarrelling and other solutions have to be found for the problems of insufficient land. The minority castes furnish some examples of this.

The instances where there is little conflict over the enjoyment of a larger share are rarer than those in which such conflict exists. If in a block where a large percentage of the coparceners are resident, some are enjoying extents in excess of their shares, others are likely to have less than their rightful shares.

Disputes are then inevitable. Even if this does not happen, that is, even if some are not restricted to smaller shares, the enjoyment of a larger share by anybody who is resident in the block is a potential danger to another who has the intention of buying up the shares of non-residents. When he does this he might have the right to expand but may find that all the land has been taken up.

What is the approach of the non-resident coparceners? To some extent they see the block as a whole. If the block is large and the residents are few they would expect some return for their share. They would be vigilant, keeping a watchful eye on any income made from the block through activities such as the felling of trees and the sale of timber. In this relative affluence is important. If in this respect the non-residents are better placed than the residents they would be regarded as avaricious if they pressed their claims too far.

More important are the individual links between resident and non-resident coparceners. In the greater number of cases the non-residents are also living in blocks of considerable density. Their shares may be small and they may well have exceeded their rights in the shares that they use. Now it does happen fairly frequently that two people resident in different blocks are non-resident coparceners relative to each other. They may then

come to an agreement which allows each of them the use of the other's share in the block in which each is resident. In this way a person who has taken a larger share than he should can regularise his position by using the shares that he has in other blocks. In this instance the return was land, but land (i.e. the right to an enlarged share) may also be obtained in return for political support and for services of different types.

As against all this if the extent enjoyed by a resident is equal to or smaller than his proper share his position would appear to be safe. This is not necessarily so. His presence in the block, however justified this may be, is a threat to the ambitions of others. If he has not managed to secure his due and others have obtained excessive extents his presence in the block is an indictment of their position. He cannot, however, be openly attacked because he has every right to be in the block. Further any action which is liable to make anybody homeless will be heavily censured; strategy and manoeuvre are therefore necessary. In situations of this type the crucial fact is not so much the relation of the rightful share to the share enjoyed as much as the size of the former. If this is small, the attempt will be to treat him as a nuisance, as somebody who should solve his land problems elsewhere, and to push him off the block altogether.

Some inferences may be drawn from all this: other

coparceners, whether resident or non-resident, are a threat to one's mobility as expressed in a secure land position. Such a view is seldom stated but it finds oblique expression in accusations of sorcery.[5] The conflicts in a block cannot be reduced to two or three simple patterns but the factors which affect them can be identified. They are the size of the block, the relative strength of shares, the relation of legal right to share enjoyed, and the proportion of resident coparceners to non-resident ones. The most vulnerable people are those whose shares are small and who are using extents in excess of these. The tensions in and over a block frequently erupt into open quarrels. Fences, footpaths and roads figure prominently as the immediate causes.

The picture that this discussion presents is perhaps that most people have to engage in a series of skirmishes as a way of defining their position in a block. This is true; at the same time there are many other ways of dealing with one's land position. One of these is by coming to terms with the other coparceners through neighbourly services, gifts of garden produce and by treating them with deference where this is appropriate.

It will be recalled that the man who has least trouble in a block is the one who has a large share and

who, in addition, does not use more land than he should. Another way therefore of avoiding conflict and its low-status implications is to get into such a position. This involves the purchase of shares from non-resident coparceners. Not all of them would, however, want to sell their shares. Some look ahead and attempt to increase their share strength to a point when it would be possible for their children to move into the block. This is especially so if the blocks in which they are resident have reached the point of maximum density. Such people are therefore bidding in competition with the resident coparceners.

Those who sell do so for several reasons. Some do this because they face some crisis and need ready cash. Others are tempted by the offers of rival coparceners. Yet others do so as a favour to those with whom they enjoy relationships of mutual assistance. A further reason for sale is because it legalises the arrangement discussed earlier in which there is a reciprocal enjoyment of shares. In all these situations, but particularly when the object of the sale is merely to help another to consolidate his position in a block, the seller must expect to face the hostility of the other resident coparceners. This is particularly so, if in the face of offers from members of his patronymic group he has sold his share to an outsider.

I shall now consider some alternatives to consolidating one's position in a block through the purchase

of shares. Some of these indicate strength, others reveal weakness. First, the partition action.

Such actions are initiated by those who have a large share in a block (perhaps recently acquired), who have been forced into using less than what this share warrants and see little hope of expanding into the rightful extent. It is obviously not in the interest of those who are using more land than they should to start such proceedings. Those who have small shares see little point in spending more than the value of the share on a partition action merely for the purpose of fencing the small plot to which their share entitles them.

It is clear then that this is not everybody's weapon. It is profitable only for those who have a large share; it can be carried through only by those who have a high level of income. In theory the costs are divided between the petitioner and the respondents, but this happens at the end and the initial costs have to be borne by the petitioner. Lawyers have to be paid and surveyors have to be influenced. The case often revolves around a genealogical chart and the preparation of this may involve searches in different record offices.[6] These costs are heavy by village standards. A partition action also proclaims that the initiator has reached a certain level of affluence. It has therefore connotations of status - on the one hand it cannot be embarked upon

unless there is wealth, and therefore some status, and its goal is the acquisition of niravul lands which is a high-status attribute.

An alternative to a partition action is to buy niravul land, build on it and to move out of the block altogether. This is an expression of strength but it has to be planned early, before one gets too committed to partition through the purchase of shares. The type of people who can contemplate this course are those who achieve a substantial increase of income through state or urban employment. They will manage as best they can in the block until they have saved enough to make the purchase and move out. When they have done this their position in relation to the block is that of any non-resident coparcener, with the difference that with their new wealth and status, they will have to exhibit a generosity which is appropriate to their position.

Another possibility which needs to be considered is that of moving out to a block in which either the person himself or his parents have a share. This may be done soon after marriage or later when the attempts to settle in the parental block have proved difficult. If the circumstances are of the latter type the move is an expression of defeat - an admission that the weapons which the person possesses are not up to what the state of conflict

in that particular block demands.

The Remuna convention is that anybody who has a share in a block has the right to settle in it provided there is room to do so. If there is no room then a partition action is necessary before he can exercise his rights in the block. This principle is very flexible and is interpreted in different ways. If blocks are arranged on a continuum in terms of the vacant land available in them, the position at the two ends is perfectly clear. At one end there are the blocks which are only half used, perhaps because of some disadvantage (such as being water-logged) or because it is situated on the periphery of the village. Those who are resident in the block may not be using all the land available for fear of offending the non-resident coparceners. At the other end there are blocks which are, by Remuna standards, accommodating the maximum number of which they are capable, each household not having much more than twenty perches. Most blocks are in between - two or three houses more can always be squeezed in. Whether an individual can move in to such a block and establish himself depends on several factors. What are the other blocks available to him? Would the residents be justified in suggesting that he should go elsewhere? What are his relations with them? What is the size of his share and, most important, what weapons can he use in the event of resistance? Changing the block may well be no more than changing the people one fights with

for conflict is seldom avoided altogether. The newcomer hopes that his strength, inadequate in the old block, will prove sufficient in the new one.

If further residence in the block has become impossible and if there are no other blocks in which one has a reasonable share, the only way of remaining within the orbit of the village is by acquiring government land. According to traditional notions, villages expand and new settlements are created through the clearing of jungle land, the act of clearing implying ownership. These notions came into conflict with the law with the enactment of the Waste Lands Ordinance which arrogated all unused lands to the Crown. Even though this happened over a century ago the old notions have persisted and the Act has been circumvented in various ways.[7] There is, however, an important difference between what this type of expansion implied at the turn of the century and the situation today.

When land was plentiful and labour was the scarcity those who moved out of the village and founded new settlements were not necessarily the economically weak. This is not so today. By about 1910 all the flat land in the village had been sold by the government either to the company which owned the plantation or to the villagers themselves. Since that time the only land available for expansion has been the hilly land on the northern and

southern boundaries of the village. (This too is now coming to an end). Blocks in these two tracts have been released by the government at various times -- for residential purposes to those who had no land and for agricultural purposes to those who had.[8] At the same time squatters from both categories have carved out little bits for themselves; many of them have been fined and accepted as tenants.

The land is quite unsuitable for paddy and for many other crops as well. Water is difficult in many of the blocks. The biggest difficulty is one of access; there are no proper roads and there is considerable inconvenience even in making day to day purchases. The result is that those who live in these two areas are very much on the fringes of village life.[9] From the point of view of those Goigama who are forced to take the step of living on government land there is a further drawback. They have little choice in the matter of neighbours; the castes intermingle in this area.

III General Aspects of Ownership

In the newer areas of the village, that is in those parts in which lands have been acquired from the government comparatively recently, the problem of shares and the exercising of rights does not carry with it the same potential for conflict as in the older areas. The

discussion in this chapter so far, relates mainly to the older, more thickly populated parts, in which the percentage of niravul lands is much less than in the other sector. The discussion has also centred around Goigama and Vahumpura problems. These are the two castes which have owned land in the village and over the years they have faced similar problems of fragmentation and insufficiency. There is, however, one point of difference between them.

During the last hundred years Vahumpura lands have been sold to immigrant Goigama - immigrant either to the village itself or to that part of it which was predominantly Vahumpura. The records of individual blocks support the Vahumpura claim that parts of the village which are now largely Goigama were at one time almost entirely Vahumpura. The reverse process did not take place in any other part of the village - the Vahumpura did not buy from the Goigama. This would have led to a very difficult position, landwise, for the Vahumpura if not for the fact there has been, right through this period, a steady stream of emigration. It is a Vahumpura lament that their best people are constantly moving out of the village. When such people acquire skills and attributes which have value in wider contexts they see little point in remaining in the village and accepting an inferior status. Their lands then come on the market.

The position of the Radaw and the Berawa is very different. They own no paddy land and it is only recently that they have been able to actually buy any high land in the village. These castes came into the village originally under the auspices of a patron who provided the land on which they could live and serve both him and others in the village. Their requirements of paddy as well as of other foodstuffs were obtained as part of the customary arrangements with those whom they worked for. The land continued to belong to the patron and even today it is only in a few cases that a formal transfer of ownership has been made.[10]

Even assuming that this is done they still face a serious land problem. A small plot which was enough for a family or two has now to accommodate seven or eight units. To some extent the traditional disposition to migrate, characteristic of these two castes, has come to their aid and some of them have established themselves in other villages. But in Remuna there is little hope of their purchasing land. The sanctions against the sale of Goigama and Vahumpura lands to them is very strong, being backed particularly among the Goigama by the notion that the rightful role in the community of these two castes is not as the owners of land but as the performers of the appropriate service. For them to buy a share in a Goigama or Vahumpura block and to move in without partition is to provoke a caste clash of serious proportions. This means

that the more costly niravul lands have to be purchased, but even when this is the type of land that is bought, neither the buyer nor the seller escapes strong censure. Thus, unless they are able to obtain government land there is little alternative for them but to emigrate, when they reach a point at which they are financially strong enough to purchase land.

So far in this chapter I have tried to describe in outline, the problems that people encounter in exercising their rights in land, and the ways in which they attempt to strengthen their land position. In these situations suspicion is the pervading attitude. While amity and co-operation are accepted as ideals and while it is recognised that good relations between neighbours is a good safeguard against the difficulties of existence, it is nevertheless those with whom one's land interests are bound up who are most often accused of irshiya (jealousy).

As I have indicated land disputes are mainly between siblings, patrilateral parallel cousins and members of a patronymic group. Cross-cousins come in if there has been an intra-village marriage in the previous generation while the involvement of outsiders is the result of a sale unless the dispute is over the boundary of the block itself. There is also a pyramidal aspect to the form of land disputes. Families quarrel among themselves but unite against others. Similarly, one branch of a patronymic group may unite against another branch. Neighbourhoods attempt to close their

doors against newcomers who want to purchase land within it and finally the village itself looks on the outsider with disfavour. He is thought of as one who has come, if not to plunder, at least to fatten on what the village has to offer. The outsider in this context includes the man who has married a Remuna woman and settled on her lands.

I have spoken at various points in this chapter of the weapons which a disputant can use and it is time to explain this more clearly. What I have been referring to are the ways in which an individual influences his opponent as well as others so that the advantage veers in his direction. One important way of forcing one's opponent to back down is through the strength of public opinion. In attempting to obtain this support it is not very useful to appeal to values unless there has been a flagrant violation of a widely stressed norm. In most situations values are flexible; there is a pool of arguments and opposing positions can be defended through appropriate choices. Far more important in the mobilisation of public opinion is the quality of an individual's links. These could be of several different types - kinship, economic, neighbourhood, political and so on. Or else a single link could incorporate two or more elements. The importance lies not so much in the type of the link but in the extent to which it is activated.

The use of one's links in influencing public opinion is only one among many weapons; a person who has money can spend it to gain an advantage in different ways. He is much readier to litigate and this has a cautionary effect on the other side. It can also be used to influence village and other officials both directly and obliquely. Then there is the use of sorcery, normally eschewed by those who lay any claims to good morality. Here again money is necessary unless one is a ritual practitioner or unless one's contacts with such a person are such that the ritual will be performed for a reduced fee. An opponent's crops and trees can be damaged. While this is regarded as a despicable act, a person who does this and manages to get away with it acquires a reputation which makes others reluctant to cross swords with him. If one's dispute is with a shopkeeper or with a toddy seller or with anybody who sells his services, rumours can be spread which are calculated to attack his custom. Finally there is intimidation and abuse, regarded as a particularly low-status and uncivilised way of dealing with one's troubles. However, when people of low status use this method it does not seriously reduce their status any further - they have used a method appropriate to their status. On the other hand if their high-status opponents retaliate in a similar way they suffer a serious loss of status.

On the face of it the community has better mechanisms for handling paddy land than for high land. Disputes are less frequent and the exercise of rights proceeds more smoothly. In part this relates to the differences between the two types of land. High land is used for residence and for permanent crops; division on the ground is the only way of dealing with shares. This is not so with paddy land - a season is complete in itself. A return is obtained for the inputs of time and money and the land passes on to somebody else.

There is, besides, another reason. As compared with forty years ago Remuna now sees itself very much as part of a wider community and as a result has different perspectives of income. The extents of paddy land in the village are insufficient to meet these new demands of income, a position further aggravated for the owners (as opposed to the tenant-cultivators) by the Paddy Lands Act. As was seen earlier in the chapter few look to paddy for upward mobility, and this colours their approach to their rights in paddy land. On the other hand a big demand for high land for residential purposes has been created by the rapid increase in population. Further those

who have enough high land to use it for productive purposes find that their return here is decidedly greater than in paddy land.

This has implications for the strategy of purchase. The big struggle is for residential land; if this is not secure one's contacts and weapons are being continuously tested and one's vulnerability may be exposed. Conflicts in a block cannot be avoided for long and the aloofness of high status is not possible. Thus the first use which is made of increased income is the consolidation of one's position in a block through the purchase of shares. This is followed, if necessary and feasible, by a partition action. It is only after this that investment in productive high land and paddy land is thought of. This process is followed through most quickly by those with an external income, that is by those who have employment outside the village.

IV The working of Paddy Land

The discussion so far would have made it clear that high land is often the object rather than the source of income. It is 'consumed' for residential purposes. In many cases the garden that goes with a house is too small to yield an income. Thus only a part of the total extent of high land is productive. (This may be contrasted with the

situation at the turn of the century, when all high land could have been regarded as productive since the houses were so few in number.)

The extent to which the community benefits from land in its resource aspect depends on how it is worked. If this is done solely by the owner then others derive no direct income from it. If on the other hand the owner works it only partially, or not at all, opportunities of work and income are available to others. Thus two questions are important: who provides work for others? How do these people select those who work for them? I shall examine these questions separately for each type of land.

Paddy agriculture involves two major sets of activities. There is first the preparation of the field, usually in three stages, followed by the sowing of the seed. Then about four months later there is the harvesting, threshing and winnowing. During the intervening period the weeding is done, pesticides are sprayed and the water is kept at that level which is appropriate to the stage of growth. Winnowing is done by machine now; the village has four of these and the owners of these are kept lucratively busy soon after the harvest. The women help with the harvesting but the preparation of the field and the threshing is done only by the men with or without cattle or buffaloes.

In relation to agricultural work people fall

into three broad categories. There are those who have their lands worked by others - people of wealth and status who normally do no manual work. In the second category are those who work their own lands and these only. The third group consists of people who work the lands of others in addition to working their own limited extents. From the point of view of paddy agriculture this category subdivides further. At the lower end are those who are not themselves tenant-cultivators but who work for them as paid labour. At the upper end are the tenant-cultivators who work large extents.

Who are those who have their fields worked for them by others? There are about a dozen invididuals whose wealth and status is such that it is felt to be right and proper that neither they nor their sons should work in the fields. There are also a few marginal individuals who give out some of their fields and work the rest themselves, thereby striking a balance between income and the advantages of having clients. To this group, others are constantly being added. These are the people who secure a type of employment with which cultivating fields is regarded as being incompatible. Teachers are conspicuous here. (On the other hand the bus drivers and conductors of the Transport Board, who in some cases draw higher salaries than the teachers, continue to work their fields.) There are also those who take little interest

in paddy cultivation because their extents are small and, as seen earlier in the chapter, their shares are usually worked by another member of the family. The latter is not generally regarded as a tenant-cultivator even though he is that in legal terms.

If, for any of the reasons discussed above, an individual decides not to work his own fields he has two alternatives open to him. He can entrust it to a tenant-cultivator (anda-goviya is the Sinhalese term) who will work it on a share-cropping basis or else he can lease it.[11] There is, besides, a third way in which one's fields come to be worked by somebody else and this is through mortgaging it. Of course the intention of the transaction is not to have the field worked but to obtain cash, usually for some emergency. The possibility of working the field could, however, be the inducement from the mortgagee's point of view.

An individual's status and the size of the share are important considerations in his choice of the method through which he works his share. But during the last decade two other factors have entered into the picture. The Paddy Lands Act was passed in the late fifties. Prior to this the anda-goviya could be discontinued at will; the produce of the field

was shared between him and the owner on a fifty-fifty basis. As far as the present discussion is concerned the important provisions of the Act were that security of tenure was guaranteed to the anda-goviya and that the owner's share was reduced to a fourth. In the village there has been some controversy over the Act. One view is that the protection given to the anda-goviya is a serious infringement of the owner's rights. The argument against this is that increased productivity is only possible through security of tenancy. Indeed, some people go even further and claim that no big break-through will occur until the whole thattu-maru system is abolished.

However all this may be, more than 80% of the cases do not work according to the Act. These arrangements have stabilised at something between the old terms and the requirements of the Act. There are many reasons for this. The anda-goviyas are competing with each other, the openings for them are scarce and so there is little united action on their part. An anda-goviya has to sell his services and the best way of doing this is to refrain from insisting on the terms of the Act. Further, if he attempts to enforce the Act, he may well cut himself off from the benefits of a client's position. It should also be noted that this is not a situation in which there is a cleavage between rich landowners and poor anda-goviyas. In the

event of a conflict an anda-goviya can expect little support from other anda-goviyas merely because they play the same role. Alignments here will be influenced as in any other conflict by a series of factors - kinship, land ownership, political and neighbourhood ties and so on.

Thus the Act has not induced a marked element of militancy into the attitude of the anda-goviya.[12] The approach of most anda-goviyas was well expressed by A. Girigoris: "We do not stick to the Act. We are friendly". This eagerness to preserve good relations became particularly evident when in August 1966, a news item appeared in the daily press to the effect that the government was considering a suggestion that it should help anda-goviyas to acquire the lands which they worked. Even the strongest upholders of the rights of the anda-goviya were disturbed by this and felt that it might lead to needless friction between them and the owners.

The second factor which has affected the situation is the various steps which have been taken as a part of the food drive initiated by the government in 1956 with the aim of making Ceylon self-sufficient in rice and other essential foodstuffs. The two steps which affected Remuna particularly were the raising of the guaranteed price of rice and the introduction of a new scheme for the sale of rice on ration. Earlier

the ration was two measures per person per week at -/25 cents per measure. In the new scheme the first measure was given free and -/75 cents was charged for the second measure. The effect of these two steps was that some marginal lands came into production and that there was an increase in the use of more scientific methods, particularly by those cultivating large extents.

The combined effect of this scheme and the Paddy Lands Act has been to induce the feeling that paddy should be grown on all lands, where this is at all feasible, but that the anda-goviya arrangement should be avoided where possible. It is against this background that the leasing of paddy land has become popular. Previous to this the lease was an instrument through which an owner obtained a lump sum to deal with some crisis. In the new circumstances the advantage to the owner is that under this arrangement he does not face the problem of having to evict the anda-goviya for the field returns to him at the end of the season.

Although the trend towards leases is growing, in the majority of cases share-cropping arrangements continue to be followed. As mentioned earlier, it is only in a few instances that the Act is strictly adhered to, but in almost all other cases the terms have moved on from the earlier system of fifty percent for each side. A few examples will illustrate this.

T. Simon works the fields of a teacher, M.D. Weerasinghe; all expenses are borne by the former and after these are deducted he takes two-thirds of the profit. In P. Jamis's case the arrangement is slightly different - the owner takes a third out of the gross return. D. Vilonis, encouraged by the owner, works the fields in a very systematic way. New varieties of seed are frequently tried and there is no skimping on the recommended inputs of fertiliser. The larger share of the expenses is borne by the owner and the produce is shared. Here the shift from the old system appears to be minimal, but, as due to the owner's interest the yield is very high, Vilonis's income has increased markedly over the last few years.

How is an anda-goviya selected? This is a problem which is faced mainly by the owners of large extents, for it will be remembered that where shares are small they tend to be worked by a member of the family. Each of the high status families have one or more families attached to them in a loose patron-client relationship. Where this is the case, a new anda-goviya is likely to be selected from one of these families. Father hands over to son and uncle to nephew. As for the rest it is a matter of offer and acceptance against the background of the patron-client idiom. The anda-goviya would like to work for an

owner who behaves like a patron, somebody for instance from whom he can borrow money in an emergency. The owner would like to select a person who will work the field well and give him his proper share, who will not stick to the letter of the law and who will in other matters behave as a good client should - helping with rituals and so on. These are the important considerations and when the village is viewed as a whole, kinship, neighbourhood and other ties are of limited significance. Caste is significant only to the extent that the fields of Vahumpura owners are not worked by Goigama anda-goviyas. Goigama fields are worked by those of either caste while the Berawa and the Radaw do not engage in cultivation at all.[13]

The importance of this source of income to an anda-goviya varies considerably. Some go in for it merely to reduce the expenditure that they would otherwise have to incur in the purchase of rice, cultivation providing less than 15% of their gross income. In other cases it is as high as 80% and such people have, of course, to safeguard their relations with the owners much more than the others.

Disputes between an owner and an anda-goviya can take various forms. The owner's complaints are mainly that the field has not been worked properly or that his due share has not been given to him. His suspicions on this latter point are strong if the crop

has not been divided on the field as it should be. If the disagreements are serious enough a complaint will be lodged with the Cultivation Committee and an attempt will be made to remove the anda-goviya under the provisions of the Act.

The discussion has centred so far around the question of who works the field - is it the owner, mortgagee, lessee or the anda-goviya? I have been concerned mainly with certain aspects of the situation when it is the anda-goviya who does so. The other aspect is how the field is worked? It is only when a field is very small that a man can work it all by himself; in other cases he needs assistance in preparing the field, in harvesting and in threshing. A father who has sons to help him is fortunate in this respect whereas others have to obtain their labour in different ways. How is this done?

There are two main methods - reciprocal arrangements and hired labour. Reciprocity can work in one of about four ways. A group may work in turn the fields of each of its members. Such a group may consist largely of kinsmen, or of co-residents in a neighbourhood, of those who have political ties or, in the case of younger people, it may be composed of friends.

Then there is the free-lancer. N.P. Abraham does not belong to any one group, but has reciprocal arrangements with several people who return the labour when Abraham works his fields. This is the only occasion when this particular collection of invididuals comes together to work a field.

In these two types of reciprocity there is a return of labour for labour but other returns for labour are also possible. A.D. Nonis is an influential trader and when he wants assistance in cultivation it is available freely. Most of those who come do not expect Nonis to reciprocate with labour. What they do expect in return is favoured treatment when some commodity is in short supply and credit to tide over a temporary difficulty. Nonis is beginning to find that this arrangement is not worthwhile. Not only does he not know the limits of the obligations that he lets himself in for, but the expenditure that he has to incur, as a reasonably rich man, on food and drink for his helpers is almost as much as he would have had to spend on hiring labour.

The essential feature of reciprocal arrangements is that for those who engage in them, time must be an abundant commodity. Those who are not in this position prefer hired labour. This is a better method if it is inconvenient for them to take time off from their regular occupations so as to enjoy the advantages

of reciprocal labour. Employees of the Transport Board are a case in point. They can take a few days off to work their own fields but cannot afford that amount which would permit participation in a reciprocal network. The others who rely on hired labour are those whose migration to the village has been only recent (anything up to twenty-five years) and who have yet to establish the necessary range of contacts.

The status aspect of hiring labour is not very straightforward. At the lower end there are those who pay for cultivation labour with some difficulty because of the poverty of their contacts. At the other end there are those who do not engage in a reciprocal network even if they have the time; they prefer hired labour because of the equality which reciprocity implies. Such people are not always of higher status than the more prominent members of the reciprocal groups which I have mentioned earlier. The wealth of the one is counter-balanced by the ability of the other to rally support. For the majority though, the line of mobility is to move up from reciprocal arrangements to a position of hiring labour. You move from contacts of equality to those in which yours is the superordinate role. Nonis is making the transition and I would expect him to do away fairly soon with reciprocal arrangements altogether.

This discussion of how the problem of labour

is solved has implications which need at least brief mention. A field is prepared for sowing in one of three ways - it may be tilled, ploughed using oxen, or muddied with buffaloes. Almost all the fields can be tilled, some can in addition be muddied while others are best ploughed. There is an element of choice. What factors influence the cultivator's decision? If he has access to a large fund of reciprocal labour, tilling is the cheapest method. If his working capital is reasonably high the use of animals is a more productive method. Thus the method chosen is to some extent a revelation of the cultivator's links, network and wealth. The cultivator could, of course, be the owner himself, a lessee or an anda-goviya.

A further aspect needs to be considered. The methods used have a bearing on the extents which can profitably be worked. One who can tap a reciprocal network and who, in addition, can afford the expenditure on animals[14] can cultivate a much larger extent than another who has a limited supply of labour. This has an effect on the response to new techniques. The person whose crop is only eight bushels per season is seldom anxious to increase his yield to ten. In terms of income and mobility other activities are probably more significant to him. On the other hand a cultivator who gets forty bushels is usually quite willing to take a small risk to increase his yield to fifty. Thus the

most favourable response to new methods comes from cultivators who farm a large extent. They are able to do this either because their working capital is high or because they have access to labour.

V The Working of High Land

In high land terms people divide into the same broad categories discussed earlier - some have their lands worked by others, a second group work only their own lands while the third category depends on the work provided by others. To some extent, however, the relationships differ from those generated by the working of paddy land partly because of the extents involved and partly because of the continuous, rather than seasonal nature of high land cultivation.

The largest high land acreage is under rubber. Tea and cinnamon are grown by a few people. Most gardens have fruit, coconut and arecanut trees and where the produce is plentiful some of it is sold. There are vegetable and betel plots where suitable land is available. The general aim extending even to the third category (above) is to have some rubber, the government subsidy for replanting being a real inducement here. The landowners confine themselves largely to this and except in a couple of instances no other crop is grown on their lands. One of them has some

cinnamon but this is only a sideline; the crop is sold while on the bush and the purchaser does the processing. This landowner also does some vegetable cultivation using hired labour for the purpose but others prefer a lease when they have land which is suitable for such cultivation.

As for those who work their own lands the choice of crop is determined by the extent available and also by the particular line of income and mobility which they follow. Very few have sizable extents in the central part of the village and it is only they who have the right type of land for tea and cinnamon. The others who have any high land income derive this from blocks in the former jungle reserve. This land is both hilly and rocky and rubber is the only convenient crop. Even when suitable land is available betel and vegetables are cultivated only by those few who regard themselves as full-time farmers.

All that I want to point out through this description is that, given the present market conditions, immediate economic return is not the sole determinant of the choice of crop. It is in this context that the popularity of rubber must be seen. With the government controlling the price and insulating the producer against world fluctuations, it has proved to be safe. The lower labour costs that operate in village conditions make it reasonably profitable.[15] Given these two features,

the decisive factor has perhaps been the element of wealth deriving from the capital value of a permanent crop. These factors together with the fact that it provides a continuous (rather than seasonal) income makes it a good substitute for paddy from the credit point of view. A lender has the type of security which he can get with paddy, but cannot get with vegetables.

So much for what is grown. What opportunities are provided by the landowners for those who are willing to work on their high land? There are the jobs which turn up periodically-- uprooting and felling trees, cutting drains, clearing the undergrowth and so on. Every landowner has two or three people whom he calls upon for such work. The income for the worker is irregular; in some months there may not be work for more than two or three days while in others he may be employed for the full month. On an average, however, people who work in this way for a landowner appear to derive something between twenty and forty percent of their total income from this source.

A few landowners have one or two people in permanent employment to attend to day to day jobs such as manuring, weeding and keeping the drains in good repair. Such people are the landowners' henchmen in their high land activities. The third type of work is the tapping of rubber; the larger landowners have seven or eight

tappers working for them. It is a job done by both men and women and since it is done only in the mornings, the pay, considered as a daily wage is poor. It is a type of work that is ideally suited to the women who can do this and attend to their household duties as well. The two consequences of this are that the supply of tappers exceeds the demand for them and that it is an occupation which is avoided by the men if anything else is at all possible. It has, however, the advantage that it is secure and that it takes up only half the day. Men who do work as tappers will rationalise their position by saying that they do this type of work because it enables them to attend to their own lands as well, whether in fact this is so or not.

Who are the people who work in these different ways for a landowner? They are primarily people whose land strength is limited and, among the younger people, those whose educational attainments are such that the prospects of external employment are extremely limited. Their connections with the landowner are broadly similar to that between the latter and the anda-goviya but there are some differences of emphasis. To some extent selection is from client families. Neighbourhood is probably more significant than in the selection of the anda-goviya. Unlike in paddy, a worker's efficiency in high land cultivation does not depend on his contacts or on his working capital. An owner has therefore a

freer choice and as such can take social advantage more into account. As he has a limited number of positions to offer he will want to select people who are not merely his hired labourers but his clients as well. In this proximity is important. However, there are landowners who regard the whole village as their field of patronage and who make no attempt to restrict their choice of workers to their own neighbourhood even though their level of income is hardly sufficient to do this effectively.

When compared with the selection of the anda-goviya kinship tends to be more important. If the owner and the worker are kinsmen advantages accrue to both provided that the owner does not forget that the worker is a kinsman and provided that the worker does not forget his inferior status. The owner's position in his patronymic group and his family circle is strengthened as one who provides work and income for its members. The worker is able to present his position not as that of a labourer but as one who is 'helping' his kinsman. As with paddy land the Vahumpura work for both the Goigama and the Vahumpura, the Goigama work only for the Goigama while the Radaw and the Berawa do not work at all.

So far I have described the work provided by the landowners. What of the others? High land work is

a much more individual affair than paddy cultivation. There is not the same urgency about land it can be spread over a longer period so that those who work their own lands can do most of the work themselves. Assistance, however, is needed at times and this is obtained more or less as in paddy - either for payment or on a reciprocal basis. The aspect that needs comment is tapping.

Those who have small plots of rubber and who normally do all their high land work themselves may find it difficult to do the daily job of tapping. As a carter, T. Peter, has to be available for transport jobs at all times of the day. His rubber plot is small and he obviously considers it unwise to refuse all morning jobs so as to be able to tap his trees. His arrangement has been to share the profits with the person to whom he has entrusted the tapping, the latter's share working out at something less than the full wage. The advantage to those who engage in tapping of this type is that they may combine this with tapping their own trees particularly if these are in an adjacent plot. Little extra labour is involved and the income is earned without actually becoming employees.

VI Working the Land - General Aspects

The two aspects of land which I have described - ownership and how the land is worked - should together

give a picture of how the resource of land is distributed within the community, and of the links which are a feature of this distribution. Links of ownership are largely with kinsmen; those which arise through working are not necessarily so. The equality implied by kinship is, in particular instances, at conflict with the inequalities of status between the landowner and the people who work for him.

The extent of agricultural land in Remuna is quite insufficient to provide an adequate income for those who, lacking the qualifications, training and influence necessary to obtain urban jobs, have to look to the land for their income. There is thus much under-employment and, as will be seen, this is a factor which is significant in patron-client relations. At the same time it is not accurate to describe this situation as one in which too many people are chasing too little land. They take what the land offers while waiting for other openings to turn up.

The relationships generated by agriculture may, by way of recapitulation, be summarised as follows. Landowners who do not work their own fields hand them over to an anda-goviya or to a lessee. The cultivator (either one of these or the owner himself) obtains the labour necessary to work the fields either through payment or on a reciprocal basis. Payment is the method through which a landowner gets his high land labour. Little of this type of work is provided by the others; some of it is done

for payment and the rest is based on reciprocal arrangements. A share system operates in a few cases for tapping. What conclusions can be drawn from this body of relationships and the norms and concepts which surround it?

Earlier in the chapter, I mentioned three categories of people: those who have sufficient land, enabling them to forego the extra income obtained by working on it, those who get by, working only their own lands and, thirdly, those who must get work from others as their own extents are so limited. In the Remuna scheme which of these one chooses, or rather which of these one is able to choose, is an important determinant of status. If an individual has a large extent of land his income is high and he provides work and income for others - acquiring power on both these counts. In this sense if two people have equal income the man who gets it from village land has more power and more chances of being recognised as a leader than the one who derives his income from an external source. The goal is to have enough land so that others may be hired to work it, but however desirable this may be only a few can achieve it. If somebody without the requisite extent attempts to do this his income will drop below his requirements. His land is sufficient, only if he adds to the return from the land the wages of his own labour. Working in this way, it is true that he has little power over others by virtue of

giving them employment; equally others have little power over him as he is not in anybody's employment. Those whose extents are even less than this, have no other course but to be dependent for work on those who have land. They work on niravul lands and sinnakkara fields while fighting for their limited shares in havul lands and thattumaru fields. It is in this way then that the work one does (or does not do) on the land, becomes a determinant of status.

The second observation that may be made is about the use of links and the power that derives from them. Their function in disputes is of the same type as discussed earlier in the chapter, except that here a larger percentage are between people of different statuses. In these circumstances the weaker party tends to have little faith in his ability to mobilise public opinion and will probably use other methods instead.

The importance of links for the recruitment of labour for paddy cultivation has already been noted but it requires some amplification. It is crucial for an ambitious cultivator to be able to muster a large work force. On this, as was seen earlier, depends the particular methods of preparing the field which he can adopt, which in turn determines the extents that he can cultivate. It is this which largely decides the cultivator's response to new methods and the consequent possibility of increased

yields. The situation may be contrasted with that of high land. Success in this type of cultivation does not depend on the effectiveness with which people are brought together. In paddy, the available openings can be fully utilised, only if a system of co-operation, or better still a co-operating group, can be established. It thus offers an opportunity for a cultivator to be the focus around which a group emerges, to be a leader, even though his landholding is limited. This has, of course, been realised by several cultivators. But the maintenance of the position is not always easy, as the cultivator has to some extent to behave as a patron. (It is in such a context that the control of a village society and the benefits that can be derived from it become particularly useful.) There are a few people, like B. Wijedasa, of whom it is true to say that their participation in paddy cultivation is almost solely due to its political potential.

The third aspect which must be considered is the patron-client character of some of the relationships. I have already given some indication of the respective obligations of patrons and clients, and these will be discussed more fully, in terms wider than land, in Chapter Five. Here I want to emphasise one aspect, very central to these relationships, which is best seen in this context. The high land worker has more opportunities, and is

expected to play client to a greater extent, than the anda-goviya. This is not because he derives a greater income from the patron, but because his work is continuous rather than seasonal, and because contact and availability are necessary to get a good share of the work that is going. He has to be around much more. When the relationship works well he derives greater benefits of patronage than the anda-goviya. This, however, does not always happen. Some clients want only employers and are not willing to extend their role beyond that of employee. More frequently patrons want only employees and wish to regard themselves purely as employers.

In Remuna, there are few patrons whose financial strength is such that they are able to have extra-village clients. It is only those who have substantial assets beyond the village, who find this both possible and necessary. To the others the village is the total field, and the attempt of most of them, is to get the best client strength which their resources will allow. But it is only to some extent that patrons compete in this way for clients. The demand for patronage is in excess of what is available in the village. The possibility of linking up with patrons in other villages is remote, and until external employment and external contacts change the situation, it will, from this angle, be a patron's market. What prevents the clients from being at the mercy

of the patrons, is the fact that they can, for some time at least, manage to live at the level of bare existence on their own resources. Still more important is the fact that neighbourhoods and the cliques which control village societies act as patron-substitutes.[16]

This situation of competition - clients versus clients and patrons versus village societies and external resources[17] - has two consequences. There is a strong desire to keep the system a closed one - neither patrons nor clients want additions to their numbers. The other result is that there has been no polarisation between clients and patrons. In fact, the balance of links in this situation has been such, that even legislation such as the Paddy Lands Act, has not seriously disturbed it.

VII The Village Approach To Land

It will be clear now that there is much competition in Remuna around land - both over ownership and over the opportunities of labour that it provides. This competition takes place within a certain idiom; it is regulated by norms and values, flexible though these might be. Two questions arise. Why is competition and conflict regulated in this way and, even more fundamentally, why is the land fought for at all? Are

its immediate economic benefits a sufficient reason? Or have these questions to be placed in another context for the significance of land to be fully intelligible? Let me examine here the problem of why the ownership and use of land is controlled in this way. Discussion of the other problem - why land is an object of competition at all - I shall reserve until the final chapter.

According to traditional notions among the Goigama (and it will be remembered that they account for 80 percent of the village population) it is they who should own the land and the other castes, particularly the Radaw and the Berawa, should perform those services which justify their residence in the village. Land should flow down in the male line and daughters should marry out of the village. The sons who inherit the land should not sell it to outsiders, for they are deemed to have only an economic interest in it. Co-operation will then be at a discount and the kinsmen who continue to hold their shares will face difficulties. Brothers should avoid conflict and work their common inheritance communally.

Under what circumstances can such values continue to be held? First, there must be sufficient land. Second, the disturbance of the village economy by external factors must be minimal. Land would thus continue to be central in the economy and the extent to which it would change hands due to external income would be limited.

What has happened in fact during the last fifty years?

The comparative self-sufficiency of earlier times has disappeared and external income has become vital to the village economy. Increase in the population has created an acute shortage of land. As compared with external employment agriculture no longer provides an income at the level which is now regarded as adequate. While status is still strongly associated with owning the land, it is income from other sources, which, for many, makes the purchase of land possible. External employment has led to considerable differences of income between brothers, incomes which are no longer obtained by working with each other on the lands of their common inheritance.[18]

These factors have combined to produce a tendency towards a free market in land. The older notions are no longer stressed unequivocally. Some lack of consensus has developed and emphasis tends to depend on background and context. Daughters who marry out no longer feel that they must ignore the shares to which legal right entitles them. The old norms, however, continue to be ideals for high status families.

While this process has been going on, other values, perhaps less important earlier, have gained in prominence. Every man, it is now stressed, should have the land on which to build a house. To do him out of this merely because one has the legal right to do so is to

act very reprehensibly. One bares one's greed if one does so. Legal rights must be exercised with compassion and not merely because one is able to meet the costs incurred in doing so. People who view their rights in this way, that is, regardless of the predicament of other people, are thought of as mankollakarayo (plunderers). In general it is wrong to covet another's land for this is no less than an attempt to improve one's status at another's expense.

In the present system then, there are new emphases, some old values have lost their rigidity while others are still valid. It is, for instance, still in the interests of most people to assert that the sale of a share in a block, should be to a coparcener rather than to an outsider. They see themselves as people who want to consolidate their position in a block and whose attempts to do so might be frustrated if such a restriction did not operate. As for caste, it is no longer openly stated that the Berawa and the Radaw should not buy land in the village but there is plenty of hostility when a sale does take place. Further the inequalities of caste are clearly expressed in social intercourse,[19] one implication of this being that even if members of these two castes were to buy land in the village, they would not be able to claim the rights of village membership, which such ownership normally carries with it.

What is the situation which has given currency to this set of values? Land though very desirable is scarce. For the majority, not only is there no money to purchase what land they need, there is difficulty even in protecting the shares that they have. If a free market were to get established the land would go to those who have the money, regardless of other considerations or values. This danger has to be averted. Thus the system of values with its newer emphasis is an attempt to safeguard the land in a way that money is unable to do. It may, therefore, be described as a 'commoner' goigama ideology.

What hinders the development of a free market? Why is an expansionist ideology not possible? It is the landowners and those who are aspiring to this position to whom this would be an advantage. Such inclinations as they may have at the moment, have to be suppressed, and they have to pursue their expansionist aims through devious means. A fine balance has to be maintained between these aims (however limited they may be) and the norms of the majority, to which, the landowners have at least ostensibly, to subscribe. A free market would work the other way round. The majority would subscribe to the views of the landowners. This would only be possible, if the landowners between themselves can look after the patronage requirements of the whole community. The resources of a patron[20] should be such that the cluster

around him thinks more or less as he does. For this, as we have seen, the patrons are not strong enough. Clients rely on other avenues as well, and patrons compete with these for their allegiance. As they are in this somewhat weak position, they have no desire to push values, which would really be of advantage to them only if they had more resources.

Footnotes to Chapter Two

1 This chapter is based on a study of land in Remuna which has been done concurrently with this.

2 This is the share given by the tenant-cultivator to the owner. The variations in the size of the share are discussed later in this chapter.

3 The situation is not the same in a neighbouring village which Remuna considers "backward". It has a different proportion of high land to paddy land and of both to population. So far this village has secured little in the way of urban and state employment.

4 How this jungle land may have been obtained is discussed later in the chapter.

5 This is explained further in the next chapter.

6 A. Haramanis was extremely anxious to initiate a partition action, especially as M. Livilin prevented him from using that extent in the block to which his share gave him the right. But he found great difficulty in preparing the genealogical chart as over 400 people were involved. It was felt that any errors in this would be seized upon by Livilin and that this would put the success of the case in some doubt.

7 It is clear that the pressures of local conditions have been very significant in the way in which this Act has been enforced in different areas.

8 This was a source of patronage to the headman.

9 The sense of isolation has been strong enough for them to start their own welfare society.

10 The insecurity of this position is particularly felt by those who no longer perform the services for which their families were brought into the village.

11 The arrangement in a lease is that the lessee pays the owner a lump sum for the use of the land for a single season.

12 The Cultivation Committee has often seen its function as that of fighting for the rights of the anda-goviya against those of the owner.

13 This is not strictly true; a few Berawa have begun to help in cultivation. This is done almost furtively, since the Berawa as well as those who employ them fear reactions of criticism.

14 It is almost as costly to hire animals as it is to hire a tractor. Even though the tractor works a much larger extent per unit of time it has two disadvantages. Some fields are too muddy for it to be used and, three or four cultivators must join together for the hiring of the tractor to be worthwhile.

15 The labour costs on a plantation are very nearly double what they are in the village.

16 This is discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

17 If a client secures good external employment, the link between him and his patron begins to weaken.

18 This process began earlier but it is during the last thirty years that it has become marked.

19 This will become clearer in Chapters Five and Six.

20 The most prominent patrons are the landowners, but they are not the only people who are able to dispense patronage.

Chapter Three

RITUAL, CASTE AND OTHER SERVICES

I Ritual Services

In the last chapter I discussed just one of the resources available to the village. In this chapter I shall examine another set.

Even at the time that the village was much less involved in a wider economy than it is now, owning the land and working on it were not the only ways of earning a living. The village needed services of different types. Despite the changes which have occurred in recent times, those services are still necessary. They continue, therefore, to be sources of income and power for those who provide them.

This is my concern in this chapter. I shall examine the ritual services that go with village belief, the services which are caste prerogatives, the specialist skills which are needed by the community and the opportunities provided by internal trade and commerce.

At a first glance there are two systems of belief and practice in the Sinhalese sector of rural Ceylon, which find no obvious integration either at a ritual or doctrinal level. Various explanations have been offered - both sociological[1] and historical[2] - to account for a situation which it is felt, exhibits to an extraordinarily sharp degree, the contradictions between a great religion and its folk accretions. In Remuna it need hardly be said these contradictions are seldom seen as such. My present purpose is not, however, the explanation of this phenomenon. Taking it as a given, I want to examine very briefly and in terms of the central concerns of this study, the services that the village needs as a result of this complex of belief.

What is this belief in outline? The people of Remuna see themselves as orthodox Theravada Buddhists. Many of the older people have learnt their Buddhism at the temple school, in the course of acquiring their elementary schooling, and are well able to expound the doctrine. This knowledge, though not general among the younger groups whose education has been more secular, is nevertheless not unusual. There is much variation, however, in interpretation, and in aspects selected for emphasis. Buddhistic support is almost invariably found for any point of view. It is generally accepted though, that a good Buddhist must observe the precepts, give

dane (alms) to the temple, and honour and be guided by the sangha.

Along with these there are other beliefs, involving different categories of beings who inhabit the supernatural world. First there are the gods, placed relative to each other in a somewhat loose heirarchical system. The power of each god derives broadly from his position in this system, and usually he has special jurisdiction, either over a region or a special area of activity. Gods are just; they listen to the prayers, entreaties and supplications of their devotees. Such devotees will light lamps at the appropriate shrines, support the activities of the devale (the centre of this type of worship), desist from taking liquor and eating meat, and in every lead a clean and upright life. The kapurala is the relevant practitioner, the mediator between men and the gods,[3] and in the villages of this area he is of the Goigama caste.

Then there are the Yakku (devils) who prey on humans - a constant source of illness and misfortune. Through the right spells and offerings they can be made to do one's bidding - either to harm others or to refrain, if already engaged in doing so. The kattadiya who can be from one of several castes, is the ritual performer who deals with the devils. In Remuna there are kattadiyas from the Goigama, Vahumpura and Berawa

castes. They also deal with the problems caused by the unwelcome presence of the perethayo - spirits of people who have died in the recent past and who are reluctant to sever their connections with this world.

A third category are the planetary deities whose effects on people are more mechanical than intentional. The propitiation of the deities and the preparation of the clay figures necessary for the purpose, is the province of the bali-edura who is a member of the Berawa caste. In performing their rituals the kapurala, the kattadiya and the bali-edura are assisted by drummers and dancers. The former are almost exclusively Berawa, while the latter are largely so.

The influence of the planetary deities and the operation of the karmic law means that life, even if it is not completely pre-ordained, is dominated at any given time by particular forces. Times are 'good' or 'bad', auspicious or inauspicious. To know of these is important when making plans and taking decisions. This information is provided, either by the astrologer through his skill and knowledge, or by the mediums through, it is believed, their supernaturally endowed powers. This very briefly is the system of belief and these together with the monks in the temple are the practitioners. Who fills these roles and what are the problems and advantages of doing so?

As we have seen the village has two temples. Remuna is not situated in those regions of the country where temples own large extents of land received in earlier centuries as royal bequests. Even in this region there are temples which, even if their wealth is not of this order, yet rival that of the rich land-owners of the area. The two in Remuna are not of this type and fall into the category of temples which have to be maintained by the congregations (dayakayas) which they serve. This is particularly so of the Vahumpura temple which has no income whatsoever from property. This has been one of the reasons for the temple being without a resident monk at various times during the last few years. The main temple with which I am chiefly concerned here, has some land, and the income from this is just sufficient, to manage its affairs without too great a dependence on the dayakayas.

The word thathwaya (status) is seldom used with reference to the monks for they are considered outside the system. They are however freely compared in terms of the influence and power that they have over the areas which their temples serve. In this region such power is dependent on the following factors: the extent to which a monk's conduct conforms to the high ethical

standards demanded of him, the way in which he instructs and guides the people in religious, civic and personal affairs, the nature of his family connections, the wealth of the temple, his level of education and the income that this may bring, and his political and other extra-village contacts. If the temple possesses a devale which is known to be a place on which the gods look upon with favour, then this adds to its income and fame.

What is the situation of the main temple in Remuna? By the standards of the region the landowners of the village are not rich. The temple wins little renown through their support, either in the character of its buildings or in the lavishness with which it celebrates its festivals. The landowners' view is that the temple should be dependent on the village, which in effect is dependence on them, for all but the needs of day to day existence. They see its primary task as one of giving guidance to the village in religious matters, through precept and example. The chief monk has chosen to take a more independent line than what these views would allow. By improving the lands belonging to the temple and by acquiring new ones, he has increased its income and made it something of a landowner. This has given him the freedom to forge links with the political left. It has also enabled him to give the younger monks a good education; one of them has now graduated and found employment as a teacher in a state school.

On both these counts he is criticised. For his political activities he is criticised by the right,

and even some of those who normally vote left, think that monks should not dabble in politics. His enthusiasm for the education of the younger monks is not shared by a large percentage of the village; this is not seen as one of the activities for which they support the temple. There is, they point out, nothing to prevent a young monk from giving up his robes once he has acquired an education at temple expense.[4] There is some support in the village, for the view expressed in the country at one stage, that monks and ex-monks should not be given employment in state schools.

All this has led to something of a split. The chief monk's new strengths are not sufficient to allow him to dominate more than a sector of the village. He enjoys the strong allegiance of a small group, a group of similar size is hostile, while the majority remain indifferent. Apart from his politics his behaviour as a monk is in no way questioned and he continues to participate in the civic affairs of the village.[5] However, he has lost to some extent, his position as an impartial counsellor and mediator and, with this, some support has been withdrawn from the temple. The chief monk no doubt feels that this economic loss is more than offset by his new gains.

What are the powers of the gods? What, therefore, are the circumstances in which the village needs the

services of a kapurala? The gods protect devotees from misfortune, cure their illnesses, prosper their enterprises, and punish those who rob them and damage their interests. One of the ways in which the help of the gods is obtained, is through worship at the shrines which are found in many homes. In this an intercessor is not necessary. If the circumstances are serious and if the effectiveness of the response is vital, the kapurala is entrusted with the job.

Some of his prayers and rituals are performed at the devale (as when punishment is requested) while others are done at the place concerned (as in curative rituals and in those which are done to ensure success and obtain protection in activities such as marriage, housebuilding and cultivation). One of the most important rituals performed by the kapurala is the expensive devol-madua. It may be performed for the particular purpose of halting a run of misfortune or illness, or in a more general way to propitiate the gods and invoke their blessings. It may be commissioned by a wealthy individual or it may be organised with the co-operation of the whole village (when the ritual is more correctly termed a gam-madua). The benefits of it accrue to those who contribute labour and money and thus make the performance possible. When a rich man has a devol-madua performed, his clients share in the benefits. The whole activity becomes a demonstration

of his wealth, links and client strength. The gammadua provides an opportunity of achieving leadership, through organising an activity which the community regards as necessary and which involves the collection and expenditure of public money.

In Remuna there is no kapurala to exploit these opportunities and kapuralas from other villages are called in. The temple has a small devale attached to it but as we have seen this is not a line of activity that it has pursued. Nevertheless the chief monk's supporters claim that it is a place which is looked on with favour by the gods, and that the monk's occasional entreaties are responded to with much more promptness than that of the ordinary kapurala.

A generation ago the village had its own separate devale but the kapurala family died out, the land on which it stood was reclaimed by the owners, and the devale came to an end. The job of kapurala goes from father to son and much is made of this tradition. The only way in which a person who is not a member of such a family can become a kapurala, is by obtaining from one, the 'ornaments of grace'. These, it is said, are only given if there is clear evidence that the aspirant kapurala is favoured by the gods. Thus in the village view the kapurala gets his position, either through birth or through supernatural selection, and not through achievement. He is expected to be a

repository of many virtues and his earning power is considerable. The combination of these attributes usually gives him a high status.

N.P. William is an ambitious kattadiya who is attempting to revive the devale and to establish himself as the kapurala. There is plenty of support for the revival but not for his installation as the kapurala. Those who oppose him say that such a change of role is wrong; a person who performs blood sacrifices to the devils is unacceptable to the gods and the devale, they say, will not prosper. William has a maternal connection with the old kapurala family and suggests that there is little harm in his being appointed a successor. He makes it clear that he is a kattadiya who does only 'good' jobs (such as curative rituals) and that he never undertakes assignments in which harmful intentions are involved. He claims further that his principles are likely to be far more pleasing to the gods than those of most kapuralas. The problem, however, is that he cannot afford to give up his work as a kattadiya until the income from his position as a kapurala is assured. Whether he will eventually be able to make the transition and achieve acceptance as a kapurala depends very much on the number and the quality of the people that he is able to carry with him. He has a considerable clientele as a kattadiya. His participation in village affairs - he is the chairman of both the Cultivation Committee and the Co-operative Society -

is not unconnected with this ambition. As a first step he now organises an annual gam-madua. This was a regular event over thirty years ago but was abandoned due to various reasons - among them, a diminishing support by the landowners. In this effort he has been helped by the clique to which he belongs. This clique has seen the political importance of moving into a position which the patrons have vacated.

A kattadiya's services (in the form of performing the necessary rituals) are required for a variety of reasons. Two of the commonest are an illness which does not respond to medical treatment, and an evil presence in the house. Equally the kattadiya may be requested to perform the malefic rituals which induce these and similar conditions. Curative rituals are perfomed openly but the greatest secrecy is necessary, from the points of view of both the kattadiya and his client, when the intention is to harm.

Misfortunes of many different types may lead to accusations of sorcery. Traditionally land disputes were at the bottom of these and the people accused were often brothers and other co-inheritors. With the diversification of the society in economic and occupational terms, the flow of sorcery accusations has also found new directions. Political antagonism and business rivalry now provide some share of an abundant crop. The accusations

are made against people who are irshiya (jealous) - people who are most affected by one's success. Those who achieve a rapid increase of income, with consequent elevation of status, are among the kattadiya's best clients. They are constantly beset by fears of what others may do to them.

In this way a kattadiya frequently gets involved in the personal affairs of his regular clients - their aspirations and the difficulties that they face in attempting to fulfil them. His services may be needed often and some clients do come to rely on him for guidance and advice. Yet the kattadiya's occupation is not one of great prestige; he is feared and looked upon as someone who thrives on the misfortunes of others. Those whose income is small are often unable to afford his services, or else, with what they can afford they may have to be satisfied with a ritual, which is much less effective than the one recommended. This has contributed to the view among a substantial minority, that the best remedy for an illness is medicine. The kattadiyas, they say, are practising a big hoax on the community.

Any person who has learnt the mantras, which is the vital part of a ritual, can perform as a kattadiya. There is no initiation nor are there any conditions of entry to the profession; the only requisite is knowledge which is acquired from another kattadiya, or occasionally from books. This is seldom easy as competition between

kattadiyas is keen. A possible course is to go to a distant place, and to learn the mantras from a kattadiya, whose clientele one is not likely to disturb. In fact kattadiyas often boast that their mantras are particularly good ones, which have been learnt from practitioners who are famous in other regions, and who have tested the mantras and found them very successful.

The would-be kattadiya begins by doing a few jobs for friends; if he impresses them his fame spreads. Gradually a circle of clients builds up and he achieves the position of an established kattadiya, when his services are sought by those in other villages. At this stage his income may approach that of a teacher. Not every one who begins by learning a few mantras ends by being successful in this way. If their showmanship is poor and if they have no flair for publicity they remain at the level of helping friends. A Wijepala is one who is in this position. He frequently speaks of the time when he will migrate to another village, and establish himself there as a kattadiya, using the mantras which he claims are far more efficacious than the bogus ones used by those in and around Remuna.

Some part of Remuna custom goes to kattadiyas from other villages. In the village itself there are about seven kattadiyas at various levels of competence and they are found in all the castes except the Radaw. The choice of a kattadiya depends on many factors - the fee that

has to be paid, the kattadiya's skill in the particular ritual needed, and the secrecy with which it should be performed. A kattadiya towards whom there is the semblance of ill-feeling is avoided. Thus one finds a Goigama man deciding against using the services of a kinsman because of an incipient land dispute, or using the services of a Berawa kattadiya because he is cheap or going to a Vahumpura one because of the need for secrecy. For similar reasons he may decide to go out of the village. These are the considerations which the newcomer is able to exploit in his attempts to establish himself.

The kattadiyas do not have a high-status background. The appeal of the profession is that people who take to it can reach a position of reasonable income and power without education, formal apprenticeship, capital or qualifications of birth. It is further a weapon in inter-personal relations. The disadvantage is that it is a low-status occupation. A kattadiya will, once he is established, counter this by proclaiming that he does only 'good' jobs, even though to develop a clientele and get to that position, he may have accepted every commission that came his way. He will also attempt to counteract the low-status handicap of the occupation by exploiting it in the direction of a following, even if he has to charge reduced fees and forego some income to achieve this.

The diagnosis that a particular condition should

be treated through a bali-thovil performed by a bali-edura is normally made by the astrologer. The best known one in the village is a Berawa and so, of course, is the bali-edura. Even so, not much work comes the latter's way and the main source of his income is his alternative occupation as a drummer.[6] The bali-eduras claim that their rituals are soothing and refined as opposed to those performed by the kattadiyas, but they involve elaborate preparations, and are expensive even in their shortened versions. The other reason for the infrequency of these performances is that Berawa contacts with the rest of the village are limited, for they perform no regular service like the Radaw. Informal contacts do not lead to work as in the case of the kattadiya.

This becomes clearer when one considers the dancers and drummers, who, as previously mentioned, are largely Berawa. They work loosely as a troupe which consists of individuals drawn from several villages. A kapurala or a kattadiya will inform a dancer or a drummer in his own village, that he needs so many of them for a ritual that he has been asked to perform. The individual so informed will then collect the others. Thus they serve a wide area; contacts with the village are limited and their strongest links are with the Berawa dancers and drummers in other villages.

In Remuna the dancers have most to do with the

kattadiyas.[7] If the latter are of sufficient standing they are looked on as patrons and if the kattadiyas want a good troupe at their command they have to discharge, at least to some extent, the obligations of a patron. Relations between the two sides are not always smooth. The Berawa would like to give up drumming and dancing and take to more lucrative occupations if the opportunity existed. In the absence of such openings, and with the continuing demand for their traditional services, there is no option but to continue. There is also some hope that the revival of the arts will lead to a greater recognition of their own art, with the possibility that this recognition will take the form of state employment. What they do feel strongly is that in one direction or the other, circumstances should change. At present they feel that they are being exploited, particularly by the kattadiyas, although they are very guarded about expressing such a view openly. In their view it is they who perform the main part of the ritual. But they know that they will have little success if they attempt to take over the rituals completely and have their own kattadiya.[8] This might even provoke more Goigama into learning dancing and drumming and the ritual may end by being an all-Goigama affair. The situation is thus one of uneasy peace but conflicts do break out at times between the Berawa and the Goigama kattadiyas whom they work for. Wages and the proper caste behaviour between

the Goigama and the Berawa are the most frequent immediate causes.

The astrologer earns the major part of his income through casting horoscopes and making talismans. He is also asked to calculate the auspicious times for a variety of occasions and rituals. The professional in the village is a Berawa. Though the activity is particularly associated with this caste, in the region today there are many astrologers from the other castes. There is a view in the village that the approach and demeanour of its astrologer is too arrogant for a Berawa and for this, among other reasons, people use the services of astrologers in other villages. The astrologer is himself very conscious of this, and realises that his aspirations for himself and for his caste, have to be tempered with deference, if he wants to enjoy a large clientele.

The astrologer is also required to interpret horoscopes and to diagnose the root causes of continuing illnesses and other misfortunes. In this the mediums are at times his rivals. He joins their detractors in suggesting that contrary to their claims, they do not derive their power from the gods, but from a deceased relative who has returned in the form of a perethaya.

To conclude this section: related to a complex of belief the community needs a set of services. These

are provided by people who occupy a set of positions which are competed for, obtained and justified on one or more of the following grounds: birth, selection, training and knowledge. There is competition between those offering the same service as well as between those offering different services which satisfy the same end. The positions lead to income and power but the extent to which their potential is exploited depends on the individual. The different services are ranked and in this two factors are important - the caste of the performer and the object of the ritual. Does the ritual seek to propitiate the Gods or control the devils?

II Caste Services

What are the caste services needed by the community? Those provided by the Berawa have already been considered in the previous section. Until recently it was the practice for the Vahumpura to cook for the Goigama on special occasions such as weddings. Each Goigama family had a particular Vahumpura individual, or a family, whom they called upon when the necessity arose. This did not mean much to the Vahumpura in the way of direct income, but underlying this arrangement was a patron-client relationship. Where the patron was a person of standing, the link was one of considerable benefit. The Vahumpura no longer accept the inferiority which this practice implies

and the few who still perform this service for Goigama households are under strong pressure to give it up.

The barber in the village is an Indian Tamil of the appropriate caste. This ceased to be a caste occupation several years ago and his assistant is a Goigama Sinhalese from a neighbouring village. This is perhaps unusual; the occupation is more popular with the minority castes. (There is in Remuna a Radaw barber who works elsewhere.) The blacksmith continues to function in the village even though the nature of his work has changed considerably. He does not make implements any more, as most of these are now bought. His work consists largely of repairing and mending and the transactions are entirely on a cash basis.[9] The arrangement with the potters in the next village is similar. The barter arrangements of earlier years - with all that that implied - no longer operates and Remuna purchases its requirements along with everybody else when the potters sell in the open market.

The Radaw receive their income for the everyday task of washing clothes as well as for the services that they perform in a ritual context. Like the Berawa they want to rid themselves of their caste occupations and to be free to take up other, more paying ones. In conditions of unemployment this is proving difficult, and only a few have been fortunate. R. Jayaneris is employed as a mechanic in a garage at Horana and with his savings he has managed

to fulful the ambition of all Radaw - to buy some land in the village.[10] Others like R. Dinga migrated to new settlements in the hope of changing over to a life of farming. When Dinga got there he found that he had been selected as a Radaw to serve the new community with his caste occupation and returned to the village in a few months. Another aspect of the position of the Radaw is illustrated by S. Cornelis. Early in his youth he worked as an unskilled labourer in a variety of jobs outside the village. These did not pay him well, there was little in the way of prospects and some were only temporary. Some years later his elder brothers moved out of the village, largely as a result of marriage. Cornelis then came back. He found that he had the use of the family property,[11] there was a demand for his services with the possibility of a reasonable income, and there were relationships of patronage to be exploited.

The general point that can be made about caste services is this: most minority castes want to get rid of their caste occupations, but alternative employment is difficult and their caste services are still needed. When some of their number have moved into other spheres those who remain can get a reasonable living out of it. Higher castes are tending to move into caste occupations, the demand for which is unsatisfied, and which are, status-wise, tending to be evaluated in rather neutral terms.

III Other Specialist Services

There are a variety of services in which the village finds it difficult to compete with the more sophisticated form in which Horana offers them. There are the mechanics who will handle anything from an umbrella to a rice-huller, the tailors (with women and children as their chief clients), and the carters who have survived despite the availability of lorry transport for over fifty years. Little capital is needed to start these ventures and the income potential is limited. Some have had urban contact and use the skills so learnt to augment a meagre income from the land. Their services are not vital as Horana provides them in abundance. The occupations themselves are viewed marginally in the assessment of status.

There are notaries practising in some villages in the area, but probably due to its proximity to Horana there is no notary practising at Remuna. Land sales are usually attested at Horana. Proctors[12] have their offices in Horana as this is where the local law courts are situated. Remuna has yet to produce a proctor although one is training as such. Contacts with them are made through middlemen in the village who make something out of it both in power and income. This is particularly so

if the case goes to the higher court in Panadura. The broker has to be ready, though, to face the anger of the litigant if the case is lost. As there is likely to be a fair percentage of these, in time, they come to be looked upon as people who thrive on the difficulties and misfortunes of others. The proctor is included in this view, but not the notary, who is much more of a village figure, inhabiting a familiar world.

It is not likely that a doctor trained in western medicine will practise in a village of the size of Remuna. There are however two ayurvedic physicians, neither of whom has been very successful. Medicine in the village view is the method of treating one type of disorder. The kapurala, the kattadiya and the bali-edura deal with other types. The medical practitioner, like the ritual practitioner has to be guided by the norms prescribed for him by the system if he wants to succeed. Like the good kattadiya, he must live up to and exploit these standards - he must in short be a professional. The physician who prescribes medicine while attending to his paddy fields has little chance of success.

Even at the time that the younger of these two physicians began his career it would have been necessary for the serious professional to have his own dispensary. Quite apart from this being a statement of serious intention

on his part, it would have been the major source of income, for consultation is, and was, virtually free. Neither of the physicians in the village had a proper dispensary. Today, not only is a dispensary vital, but a physician must also have enough capital to stock prepared medicines; it is no longer economical for him to prepare these in small quantities. This has resulted in a drift towards the ayurvedic dispensaries and practitioners in the towns, with the local physicians being consulted only for minor ailments. The opening of a state-aided free dispensary in the village has therefore been welcomed by the physicians, as a return to the village focus in medicine.

The other important service which needs comment is house-building. Three types of craftsmen are involved - masons, carpenters and painters. The last of these is the least important, both in the identity of the craft as well as in the extent to which the service is regarded as essential. Carpenters engage in furniture making as well, but most of them derive the larger part of their income from doing woodwork for the construction of houses. Non-utility or ornamental furniture is bought mainly at Horana.

Some of these craftsmen find their work outside the village. Opportunities for work occur in the villages

around for many different reasons. There may be a shortage of craftsmen in a particular village. Their rates may be too high. Or else the owner-to-be may not be on good terms with those who are regarded as technically competent for the job. In such a situation the kinsmen and contacts of a Remuna craftsman may recommend him as a man who is both competent and honest, and one job may lead to another. A second way in which work outside the village may be found is when a craftsman in another village decides to invite an outsider when the job needs skilled assistance, rather than seek the co-operation of his rivals. It is also possible to work for a contractor who undertakes the larger jobs in the region. Those who seek this type of external work are those who are losing out because of the better internal contacts of the others.

A new style of house-building has begun to have a vogue in Remuna. Some of the craftsmen whose skill is in the older style find that less work is now entrusted to them. At the same time the payment of high rates to urban craftsmen, who are skilled in this style, is considered a waste of money. The younger craftsmen, particularly those have had some urban experience, have benefited greatly by this trend, and it is they who now handle the bulk of the work in the village. Many of them tend to have one of two emphases in the people they work for. Some rely on the patrons and play the role of client while others work mainly for people of their own level.

The particular interest here is the latter category.

In earlier times the poor built their cadjan houses themselves and the craftsmen were given work only by a small sector of the community. Today it is the ambition of almost everybody to own a brick house and many do in fact achieve it. This is the first major use to which savings are put once the position of residential land is consolidated. If a new house is not possible the old one is reconstructed in the new style, a further saving being made by the owner and his family assisting the craftsmen with unskilled labour.

All this has put the craftsmen in a strong position. Most people have either used their services or are anxiously looking forward to the time when they will be able to do so. It is a situation which they can exploit and two strands are discernible in their approaches. One strand appears to say that the services are offered only on the basis of inflexible charges. The aim is to have a consistently high income in the hope that the saving which this makes possible will eventually turn the craftsman into a landowner. That is, esteem later on is preferred to present approval. On village earnings alone it is doubtful whether this goal can be reached, although becoming a landowner is very much a possibility if a craftsman is fortunate enough to secure sub-contracts from a large contractor.[13] The other strand is to use the occupation to build up a following by

working at reduced rates and investing it with an atmosphere of service.[14] No individual's approach consists exclusively of one strand but in many cases there is a dominant one which the village has long since recognised.

The rewards of these occupations are such that there is considerable rivalry among the craftsmen. This is seldom expressed openly but it finds its echo in many political groupings and alliances. Training, which is acquired through being apprenticed to a senior craftsman, is difficult to come by; going to another village - the more distant the better - is thought of as much the best way of securing it. As the training is not paid for, and as wealth and education are not attributes which are necessary to embark on these occupations, their ranking in status terms is not very high.

There are craftsmen in all castes except the Radaw. The Berawa seldom do any work in the village except for themselves. The Goigama work goes either to Goigama or Vahumpura craftsmen while it is only the latter who does the Vahumpura work. The general practice, then, is for Goigama craftsmen to work only for the Goigama. The few who do occasionally work for the other castes pass this off as a bit of community service even when the usual charges are made.

IV Internal Trade and Commerce

What are the business opportunities in the village? How and by whom are they exploited? Not only in quantum but in range as well, the consumer goods needed by the village have expanded considerably in recent years. As some of this is bought in the village itself the opportunity to supply these goods does exist, but exploiting this has its difficulties. Two types of stores have emerged. The smaller ones sell tobacco, betel leaves and a limited range of household necessities and foodstuffs, while functioning as a tea room. The business is carried on in the front of the house or in a temporary structure attached to it. In running it, the owner is usually helped by the rest of his family, as and when they can. The venture is begun in the smallest possible way with very limited capital, and is regarded as having got off the ground, if it yields a small profit, in addition to providing the household with a good part of its food. The area they serve is a neighbourhood and few of them show any signs of growing into anything bigger.

The larger stores are the regular village shops and they are housed in their own special buildings. Some of these too have a tea room attached and in two cases they tend to dominate the business. The owners of these stores are people who began with some capital

although their backgrounds are not quite those of landowners. Some have been thwarted in their attempts to become teachers or to obtain some other type of state employment. There is a tendency for them to interest themselves in the affairs of the village and it would be fair to describe them as ambitious. The landowners avoid this line of business, although in two cases, they have helped less prosperous branches of their families to start them. The proprietors of both types of stores have been exposed to some external influence, almost all of them having had employment away from the village at some time in their youth.

For those who have neither education nor special skills, shopkeeping provides the opportunity for moving towards a position of high income, especially as (in the village view) it can be attempted with varying levels of capital. Success, however, is limited. Every now and again a store closes down and there are quite a few ex-shopkeepers in the village. Not all of them can be regarded as casualties. The owner of a small store, disappointed with the lack of growth in his business may wind it up feeling that the game is not worth the candle. With the big store bankruptcy is a real possibility, the crucial problem being that of credit. Unless a shopkeeper gives credit his turnover will drop to that level which makes trading difficult. The other reason for giving credit is that the shops in Remuna are in

competition with those in Horana. The general preference is to make purchases in Horana, for this is taken as a sign of affluence. Remuna has to counter this by making the conditions economically attractive, as well as by providing for the purchase a background of personal relationship. Credit achieves both. A shopkeeper's skill lies in knowing what maximum of consumer credit his business can stand with safety, and then in keeping his customers happy while sticking rigidly to this limit. No shopkeeper really manages to do both.

There is a further complication. The basic purpose of a shopkeeper's enterprise is to improve his status in the community. If he pursues income in single-minded fashion, if the volume of the credit that he is willing to give is dictated entirely by the interests of his business, he will have no following and he may even become an object of hatred. This is an added pressure towards the extension of credit. At this point he has to choose between one of two lines - an immediate increase of status through having a following, as against raising status through the slow process of profit, savings and wealth. The survivors veer towards profit with the result that the shopkeepers are viewed as a group who thrive at the expense of the community. The profits they make, it is often said, could be made by anybody else who was equally hard-haarted.

Thus, in the eyes of the village the shopkeeper's

role is one that is difficult to justify. The left-wing clique which controls the Co-operative Society has tried to exploit this feeling both to its political advantage as well as to increase the range of purchases made from the Co-operative Store. In this it has been helped by the government policy of distributing essential foodstuffs, which are in short supply, only through the co-operative stores. Even so, effective competition with the private trader is difficult as the co-operatives offer no credit.

Agricultural production gives rise to another category of business opportunities. After the harvest the chaff has to be separated from the grain, and the preference now is to have this done by a winnowing machine. The capital invested in such a machine is not high, and a good profit is possible, provided the owner operates it himself. The landowners have not gone in for this but some have helped their clients to buy the machines, the capital being repaid on easy terms. The paddy huller (which removes the husks from paddy) and the roller (which rolls the rubber into the form in which it is sold) require a higher level of capital. Landowners who have these machines, hire labour to operate them, and some profit is left over after the payment of wages. Others who can just raise the capital for the purchase, operate it themselves and obtain a profit, which is not much lower than what they would have earned if they had state

employment. In status terms two characteristics are important in the evaluation of businesses of this type: what is the amount of capital invested and who provides the labour?

The producer has to sell his rubber to a licensed rubber dealer and in most villages in the rubber producing areas there is such a dealer. In theory this is a business which does not require heavy capital. The small dealer in the village sells his rubber to the bigger dealer in a market town and if he does this at sufficiently frequent intervals he can get by with a low working capital. In practice there are other considerations. At the village level, the dealer with the large turnover, is the one who advances money to the producer against the supply of rubber. He cannot do this indiscriminately for some of the advances turn out to be bad debts; at the same time if he is too inflexible in his arrangements he will lose his custom to the dealer in the next village.

A son of one of the landowners (the landowner is actually the licensee and has provided the capital) has been functioning as the dealer in Remuna very successfully. While making a reasonable profit he has performed the chief function of a patron in relation to those who sell rubber to him - that of giving them loans. This is a big source of power not only for him but for the family as a whole. During the time that I was in the village the Co-operative Society decided to enter this business

and obtained a licence. They offered the producer a higher price but no advances were given. At the time that I left the village the Society had been forced to admit that the venture was a complete failure.

The most dramatic increases of income are achieved by those who sell illicit liquor. Two types are popular in the village - toddy which is obtained either from the coconut tree or the kitul palm, and a brew locally known as 'cider', which is made in the village using a variety of ingredients. Permission to tap toddy even for personal use, is given only under special circumstances; the manufacture of cider is, of course, prohibited. The income from toddy is a matter of luck for a tree which is tapped may or may not have a good flower. Cider matures in three days or so, and as such can be manufactured to meet any demand.

Those who engage in this business lose status by exhibiting the wrong values. It is people in the low income bracket with little status to lose who are attracted by it, this being particularly so in the cider-making. If they are successful, income shoots up to the level of those who have state employment and they will enjoy some power through having a regular clientele. If the income is sustained this power will increase and it may even begin to counteract the disadvantages of the occupation. The sellers of toddy make a distinction

between themselves and the cider-makers. Toddy they argue, is nutritious, and if taken in moderation quite beneficial; cider is supposed to have a corrosive action. This distinction is generally accepted, and, taken with the fact that the production of toddy is limited, the toddy sellers are not regarded as such villains as the cider makers, provided they do not make unconscionable profits through adulteration.

The opposition to the activities of the liquor sellers is strong, though perhaps diffused. The fundamental reason for this opposition is that they make their money, as it were, against the rules. The effort required is minimal and they have neither lands, education nor special skills. The usual cricicism is that they enrich themselves at the expense of the health of their customers and of the well-being of their families. Such gains it is said will never last. More pointed criticism comes from those who live in the neighbourhood of a booth. They complain that the area has lost its tone and that drunkards make a nuisance of themselves by being abusive to people with whom they have no quarrel. At times this criticism is justified, but just as often it is a reaction to the changes in relative position (in the form of expanded consumption), which the liquor seller's increase in income has brought about.

Another type of criticism could come from many different quarters. Abuse while in a state of drunkenness

is a recognised weapon in disputes, being particularly effective when used by a person with few other weapons against his high-status opponent. When such abusive language is used after a visit to a booth, whether in this type of context or any other, the victim will direct his anger not only at the culprit but also at the booth owner, for providing the conditions which give rise to unruly behaviour.

The viewpoint of the more obviously religious sector of the village does not go beyond a general condemnation of these activities. At first sight this may seem strange. However the liquor booths are not centres of reaction against the temple, their power over the village as a whole is limited and they are not in conflict with the temple over any vital interests. No dimunition of custom is likely even if the temple were to make a special point of preaching temperance. Few, if any, of the liquor sellers would flaunt their activities in the face of the temple and any questions by the monks about their activities is likely to be met with evasive answers, if not stout denials. Some of the toddy sellers are enthusiastic participants in temple activities particularly at those times when the trees have gone dry and business is slack. One of them is in fact the anda-goviya of one of the temple paddy fields. Altogether this is not an axis on which opposition to the liquor sellers builds up in any significant way.

The danger in the business is that the police may swoop down on a booth at any moment. Incessant vigilance is necessary, for three quick convictions with a jail sentence on the third occasion will wipe out all the gains. Informants who tip off the police are not lacking - neighbours, and agents acting on behalf of rival sellers are prominent among them. Some booths, because of the composition of its regular customers, become associated with one particular wing in politics. The police find added informants in the supporters of the other side. Despite the charges of slackness against the police they have so far not allowed a business of this type to stabilise itself in the village. Success has been only ephemeral thus proving right the prophets who forecast that profits made in this way will never last.

V Conclusion

I have not attempted to enumerate all the services that the community needs or every form of business for which it provides scope. The more important aspects have been discussed so as to infer the underlying principles.

I have indicated at various points in this chapter the extent to which background can be correlated with a choice of occupation. Some of these are confined to particular castes while others draw on families which are

at particular levels of wealth. Little can be said beyond this. Further, situational differentials, even if they exist, can hardly be identified with accuracy when the number of people who follow a given occupation is so small. In such a context the attractions of an occupation, and how it is evaluated, are likely to be more significant than the background of those who take to it. What then can be said by way of conclusion about the status and evaluatory aspect of the occupations which have been discussed?

Some of the trades and occupations are approved by the society while others are not. Those who follow the better ones find that occupation is an attribute which pushes up their status. With the others it is a reducing factor and they follow it because it has some other compensating attribute such as high income. Behind these evaluations are two principles: what levels of birth, caste, ownership of land, capital, education and training does recruitment to an occupation require? Do those who follow it provide a service to the community or are their profits made at its expense? The way in which the community evaluates an occupation becomes intelligible only when it is examined from both these points of view. Almost all the occupations discussed in this chapter rank well below the landowner in village rating. They involve the sale of labour to the community and the potential of income is much less.

Success in these occupations comes to those who best fit the ideal which the community has for the purveyors of that particular service. Or to phrase it differently success is achieved by those who, either through inherited attributes or acquired characteristics best legitimate their claims to an occupation. Differences in success lead to differences in status; income varies, so does the size of the following. Those who are successful can increase the level of their expenditure, political office becomes a possibility and other high-status attributes can be acquired. An occupation does not, therefore, fix an individual's status - it merely provides a range.

A problem faced by all those who follow these occupations will have been noticed. They have to decide between two types of goals - do they want to be landowners or leaders? If they decide on the landowner course and are able eventually to reach this position, their gains in status are substantial. But they will encounter difficulties. All possible savings have to be harnessed to this end - and no concessions can be readily made to clients in the form of reduced charges. The disapprobation of the community will therefore have to be faced.

Such stringency is not called for if they opt for leadership. A following is built up and the approval of the community is immediate. The potential increase

of status is, however, somewhat less than with the other course. Thus the options are a long term increase of status through land or a short-term increase through leadership.

It will have been observed that the trades and occupations examined so far do not function in an entirely closed system. These services are available to other villages; in turn people from those villages serve Remuna. The interchange appears to have stabilised at a particular level for each occupation. How has this particular level been reached? Why is it that the practitioners in Remuna do not work for a much wider area or, alternatively, why do they not confine themselves to the village? They would certainly like to draw their custom from as large a region as possible but in most instances cheaper services are provided by the man on the spot. It is only in special circumstances that the outsider is preferred (see discussion on house-builders and kattadiyas). Working on a regional rather than a village basis becomes a real possibility only when a distinction is made between services which are needed frequently and others which only experts can provide. This will probably be done from a central point in the region, a heirarchy of skills gets established, and possibly, associated institutions as well. Such arrangements do not exist for most of the services which have been discussed. Where it does, the

specialists are in the towns, and those who want to work for a region must station themselves in these places.

While those who provide services would like to work for a wider group they are well aware that the greater part of their custom is provided by the village and that their rights in it must be protected. Though people in the village may on occasion choose an outsider to perform a particular service for them they know that they get the best terms from their own man, for there are many other ways besides money of paying him. The level, referred to above, is the result of these forces. The practitioners desire to work on a regional basis but recognise that this cannot be done to any great extent. The village would like to be freer in its choices but recognises equally that it can back this up with payment only in a very limited way.

Each side thus has a position to safeguard. Practitioners are wary about neglecting a job in the village for a more favourable one elsewhere as public opinion will be critical. They in turn express their disapproval if an unreasonable amount of work goes outside the village. The village cannot still fight effectively for external resources and while this continues to be so, rights in the village - 'land' - must be safeguarded.

Footnotes to Chapter Three

1 Ames in Harper (1964)

2 Sarathchandra (1953)

3 The same term is used for the marriage broker.

4 Although no figures have been worked out by any central body, several instances have been reported in the region.

5 The chief monk usually takes the chair at the meetings of the larger village societies.

6 As the bali-thovil is a Berawa preserve, most dancers and drummers can conduct parts of this ritual even if they cannot function as the principal performer.

7 There would have been similar contacts with the kapurala if there had been one in the village.

8 Those who have tried to do so have not achieved any striking success.

9 This contraction in work has been counteracted by the greater amount of repair work which the increase in population provides.

10 Such sales produce a hostile reaction and this was not an exception.

11 The legal owners of the property are the descendants of the patron under whose aegis Cornelis's family first came to the village

12 Solicitors perform the same functions in this country.

13 One of the landowners began his career in this way.

14 A mason has been so successful in this that he was adopted as the left candidate for the village seat in the local government elections of 1967. He lost to the son of a landowner by a very small majority. (See Chapter Five)

Chapter Four

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

I Introduction

It was seen in the chapter on land that while the internal competition for it is keen, there are strong attempts to limit its benefits to the village. Sales to outsiders are frowned upon and they are given no work on the land. It was evident in the last chapter that this emphasis is not quite so strong in the matter of services. It is accepted that up to a point the village can go out for these services and equally that those who provide them are free to serve a wider area. Even so, as in land, the integrity of Remuna as a unit is very much in focus. What happens when it comes to exploiting the employment and commercial opportunities presented by a wider world?

At first sight Remuna does not seem to see these as forces against which it need protect itself. On the contrary they appear to be viewed as welcome opportunities in an economic situation which has been made increasingly

difficult through the shortage of land. It is felt that Remuna can compete effectively with other villages for these prizes. Alongside with this view there is the recognition that while external forces may not damage Remuna as a unit, while its position vis-a-vis other villages may be improved, that they nevertheless cause re-alignments of power and status within the village. A may benefit while no opportunity may come B's way. C, previously well placed, may remain static, while A moves up dangerously close to him. Thus there are people who voice their misgivings about this involvement in wider spheres of trade and employment. Prominent among these are people who see little possibility of benefiting from external opportunities through a lack of education, capital and contacts. Such views are also held by those whose wealth is largely inherited and whose position is now being challenged by others whose income is derived from external sources. This expression would be stronger but for the fact that most of them have children who are benefiting from the expanding opportunities of employment.

The recognition of the far-reaching effects of these forces has had the effect of producing a set of values through which the community attempts to control their influence on it. In so far as there are right ways of improving one's land position, there are right avenues through which to obtain an external income

and right people who should benefit by it. At one level the individual competes with people in other villages who have similar strengths and accomplishments. The ultimate competition, however, is for power and status within the village.

In this chapter I examine a series of occupations and activities through which income is drawn into the village - the production of goods for an external market, shopkeeping and small-scale trade in the villages and towns of the region, other types of business which require a level of capital which only the landowners possess, and the different forms of employment to which the village now aspires. As before the questions of who takes to a particular activity, its advantages and how it is evaluated will be considered. During the discussion I hope to describe further aspects of the patron-client relationship and to indicate also how political measures taken at a national level impinge on the village, pulling it thereby into the vortex of national politics.

II Village Production

What is made or produced in the village for sale outside? On the agricultural side it will be remembered that in addition to rice and rubber, the village also produces limited quantities of tea, cinnamon, coconuts, vegetables and fruits. In the three

latter products, what is left over after village requirements are satisfied is available for external sale.

The method through which rubber is sold was noted in the last chapter. Tea, in the form of raw leaf is sold to a factory in an adjoining village. The cinnamon is sold to dealers who function over an area of several villages, the production in each village being very small in most cases. The cutting and the processing is often done by the dealers themselves. One person in Remuna has attempted this business on a very small scale but his lack of capital prevents him from competing effectively with the regional dealers.

Paddy is sold mainly to the Co-operative Store, at times in repayment of loans taken for cultivation purposes. Itinerant traders who attempt to purchase paddy in the village for sale to Horana and Colombo have had little success. People whose paddy shares are limited do not like to be seen selling their paddy. Others would then draw the inference that they do this because of financial difficulty and that as a result their households have had to do without rice for some meals - an impression they are not at all anxious to give.

A few people who own carts trade in coconuts. They fill a cartload by purchasing at different points in the village, and transport it to Horana, or to fairs, for sale. No such arrangements exists for fruits and vegetables. The serious or professional vegetable

cultivator sells his produce either at a fair or to a stall-holder at the Horana market. The fruits and vegetables which the others have for sale are what is left over after the requirements of the household have been satisfied. Some of them do sell to the shopkeepers in Remuna, and will even take it to Horana if the quantity is large enough. Selling garden produce in these circumstances is frowned upon, the right behaviour being to give the excess to one's neighbours.

Rubber, tea and cinnamon are permanent crops, the prices and demand for which are determined by the world market. From the point of view of the use of capital and land they may be regarded as alternatives, the preference being largely for rubber. For paddy, coconuts, vegetables and fruits there is a big demand in the country and the question which arises is why this is not exploited by the village. Why, to consider one aspect of this, are there no middlemen? The reason in the case of paddy has been seen and the obvious answer in the other cases is that village production is too low. One may then question why the village is not stimulated into greater production, in this context of heavy demand, either by middlemen or by some governmental agency. The view is often advanced that better marketing and credit facilities will greatly increase production and to some extent this is certainly true. If there is

a purchase point in the village for (say) vegetables, paying a guaranteed price, then there will be some increase. This does not, however, appear to be the fundamental reason for low production.

The possibilities of effective upward mobility through this type of agriculture are seen as remote. Given the present extent of land, the village does not see it as at all likely, even with improved methods of marketing and a heavy dose of expertise, that income obtained in this way would compare favourably with that obtained through urban and state employment. Thus selling one's garden produce will be what it has always been - circumstances forcing a low-status poor man to increase his meagre income through a method which he would rather avoid.

Remuna is not famous for any craft-work. No sector of the community derives the major part of its income from this type of activity, as happens in some neighbouring villages, nor is there any evidence of such a tradition having died out in recent times. Basketry is done in some households, not so much with the pride of a craft, but as something to be done with unproductive time, so as to increase a limited income. This is done by all castes except the Radaw but its particular importance is for those among the Berawa who have neither learnt

their traditional skills[1] nor any other trade. The demand for the product is there and it is easily sold to the retailers in Horana but there is some difficulty in getting the reed. This grows wild and has to be obtained from areas twenty miles or so away.

Some mat-weaving is also done and the pang needed for this is grown in the village. It grows on the type of low-lying land which is also suitable for paddy. With the increased price now being paid for paddy there is very little land under pang. The few mats which find their way out of the village seldom reach the big towns. Some of the older women are very skilled in weaving mats along traditional lines, but their product cannot compete with the streamlined ones produced at the government-sponsored centres, under urban direction, for an urban market. Those who are active in village societies feel that such a centre should be started in Remuna too, not merely for mat-weaving but for other crafts as well. They know that the demand for these products is expanding, and they have seen in other villages the assistance that the government gives, both in modernising techniques as well as in marketing the product. They also realise that there is little chance of breaking into an urban market unless they have assistance, particularly with design, from those who know that market. Letters have been written to various government agencies but little has

happened probably because government effort is directed mainly towards those villages where a tradition of craft is still strong. The movers in this matter, it should be noted, have been the village politicians; the crafts, because of their low quantum of production, have been left well alone by the trade.

The cottage industry of textile weaving on handlooms has its representatives in Remuna. This is an activity which would appear to be ideally suited to the purpose of harnessing the unutilised labour in the village. It is done in the home when the women are supposed to be free from their household chores. The cottage industries arm of the Rural Development Department assists them to buy the looms on easy terms and the yarn is also provided in a similar way. Training is given and the product is bought. The possibilities of income are regarded as high for an occupation of this type but it would be rash to claim that anything more than 50% of this potential is achieved by the village taken as a unit.

Some part of this shortfall is due to what may be regarded as inherent drawbacks. A woman works alone amidst all the distractions of the home, and the fatigue of operating a loom is felt more under these conditions than when working to a routine in the company of others. The weaver has to provide her own drive.

The real difficulty is however of another type.

Most of those who work on handlooms in the village deprecate the activity as one which does not provide them with a good income. This is not a statement of economic fact but is a defence against the forces of irshiya.[2] If a person who is above the level of want works too hard at the loom she is looked on as one who is too fond of money and who is exhibiting too keen a desire to score off other people. Initially some may treat these views with indifference but after some time the majority succumb to these pressures and work thereafter only in desultory fashion. Among the few who maintain a high level of output are some of the unmarried girls, who, seeing few prospects of employment and little chance of being given a good dowry, regard their skill in weaving as a standby. To a large extent they are free from the reaction which the industry of the married women provokes. The others who work hard at weaving are those who, but for this, would rank very low in the scale of income and whose need, therefore, to work at it is abundantly evident. Recruits to the craft from this category are, however, few for in some cases they are unable even to collect the money for the initial payment towards the purchase of a loom.

The handloom weavers are largely Goigama and Vahumpura. The Berawa have felt free to attempt it but they have experienced difficulties, mainly financial, in getting started. The Radaw are wary about embarking

on activities of this type for it is tantamount to a proclamation of independence. Until alternative employment becomes available they do not want to jeopardise the benefits of their caste occupation through any action which can be construed as one of hostility.[3]

III The Village Entrepreneurs

In the types of production so far considered the unit has been the household. Except for handloom weaving, there is little evidence that any of these are either expanding in scale, or changing in character due to entrepreneurial activity, even in its distributive aspect.

I want now to consider other types of production where entrepreneurship is clearly evident. The enterprises which will be discussed provide examples of the main categories of entrepreneurs operating at the village level in this region - landowners, those from the middle levels of the society, and outsiders, who perhaps have some connection with the village and have come into it because of some special advantage that it offers. In all cases except one the raw materials are brought in from elsewhere and the village contribution is labour.

Remuna is situated in an area in which quarrying is done, outcrops of granite being plentiful. One

of the landowners has decided to start a metal-crushing business in partnership with his son-in-law, who is however resident in another village. The project appears to be planned on a scale such that the supply of metal is envisaged not merely to the small builders in the neighbouring villages, but also to larger contractors as far afield as Colombo. The business has been in an embryonic state for many months - some machinery has been bought, a few sheds have been constructed but it has never really got off the ground. The landowner's clients are waiting hopefully for the time when the works would provide them with regular employment. The landowner's explanation is that the work would begin as soon as his son-in-law had the time to give to it and after some difficulties over the site had been overcome. Another version of the delay was that the expected credit had not materialised.

The bakery in Remuna is just beginning to establish itself. Its main line of business is not so much catering to the needs of the village as supplying bread and buns to schools in the area. The owner is, like his brothers, one who has had employment outside the village in his younger days. The bakery was started on his return with the experience gained during this time. It is regarded as an activity which has the same potential of income and mobility as shopkeeping but

with two differences. A special skill is involved and the baker is not thought of as one who makes his profits at the expense of the community.[4] It is generally accepted in the village that the baker has made a success of his venture even though he has yet to build a house and make investments in land. His status has altered noticeably and this has had two consequences. He has incipient clients (his actual employees are few in number) and he has to contend with the envy and the rivalry of those who view his progress with apprehension.[5]

The third venture is one which produces handloom textiles. It has about a dozen looms and a set of girls work these on a wage basis. The proprietor is one who has married into the village and is in fact the baker's brother-in-law. He has had problems in obtaining his quota of yarn[6] as well as some difficulties with his sales. In the urban market he has not found it easy to compete with those centres which are either run or are sponsored by the Rural Development Department and with those concerns which have contacts in Colombo and to whose designs and specifications production is geared. It is to the retailers in the small towns and villages of the region that he now directs his sales (which he does himself, in between supervising his workshop). While the business has had its problems its recent expansion is obvious and it is felt in the neighbourhood that the proprietor's energy and drive will ensure its

ultimate success. Thus far he has taken little part in village affairs, even though he has a following due to the employment that he provides. The reaction of the village to his efforts and the success which has attended them is clear, when he says that the people of Remuna are unfriendly.

The three enterprises which I have described are Goigama ones. A lime-kiln has been started by a Berawa and he too is one who has married into the village. (In fact his father-in-law too is a newcomer having settled in the village at the invitation of his wife's sister and her husband, at a time when the prospects of earning his living as a drummer in his own village were dim.) The business is thriving; the lime is purchased from several quarries in the area, fired, and then sold to the building trade. At the moment the owner does not have his own transport but he hopes to acquire a vehicle soon and so be able to serve an even wider area.

With the expansion of his business his in-laws have become his satellites - a situation not welcomed by those relatives who invited them originally into the village. A further reason for the strained relations between the two sets of families has been the approach of the owner of the lime-kiln to his relations with the rest of the village. It is one of humility

and conciliation as befits a Berawa (in the eyes of the Goigama). Each year he holds a pinkama[7] to which a large section of the village is invited[8] - an expenditure, which in the opinion of the others, could well be directed towards improving the position of the caste. His Goigama neighbours find him much readier than some Goigama patrons to be of financial assistance to them. In these and other ways he has established himself as a person of some importance in the village, even though the labour force at the kiln is small.[9] The other set take a more independent line and are as aggressive as the hard facts of employment and income will allow.[10] They feel that the owner of the lime-kiln is undermining their position and undoing the good work which they have done for the caste.

The most successful venture in the village is beedi-making.[11] The business has its headquarters in an adjoining village and makes beedis for a large concern in Colombo which advertises itself as a manufacturer of a particular brand of beedi. What happens in fact is that this concern distributes the wrapping leaf and the tobacco to its agents, who then get the beedis hand-wrapped, operating perhaps in a group of villages. In this case the proprietor's younger brother lives in Remuna and runs this branch of the business. The leaf

and the tobacco are given out to the wrappers who work either at the centre or take it away to their homes. Having worked at their own pace they return the appropriate number of beedis and are paid on a piece work basis.

The workers are mostly young people of both sexes between the ages of 15 and 25. Some have given up the struggle of education and are doing this until more suitable employment can be found. Others have acquired some qualifications, and find this a profitable way of filling in time, while waiting hopefully for the job to which they think their education entitles them. There are also unmarried girls who have little thought of external employment and who find beedi-wrapping an excellent occupation until such time as they get married. Indeed many are preparing themselves for it by purchasing through their earnings, such items as clothes, jewellery and furniture.

The beedi-wrappers are drawn from the middle and lower levels of the society. There is some loss of status if this is a man's main occupation but it is better than being an unskilled manual worker. This is especially so if one has some education and is waiting for something better to turn up. The attempt is often made by parents to pass this off as pocket money for the young and to look on it as a profitable hobby in which they indulge. In fact, incomes as large as those

obtained through tapping rubber are possible, and wrappers make substantial contributions to the income of the home.

Until very recently the business worked very smoothly. It tapped the labour resources of a large age-group in a manner that was satisfactory both to the business and to the wrappers. It began in Remuna some years ago at the invitation of some of those who were active in the Rural Development Society at that time. One of them made a house available so that the project could get started and very soon the society was able to chalk this up as one of its successes in its efforts to improve the economy of the village.

However, as time went on the political possibilities of the venture became apparent both to the Rural Development Society and to the Co-operative Society. It was true that the manager made little attempt to exploit this; even though he provided work for about seventy five people he showed little interest in the political activities of the village and indicated no desire to influence its affairs. Nevertheless the power potential of the venture was clearly evident.

The opportunity to take some action about this came when the company (along with other similar ones) experienced temporary shortages of tobacco due to the difficulties of import and exchange.[12] The result was a

serious drop in the income of the wrappers. At about the same time the feeling grew, in the areas in which beedi-wrapping had got established, that the company and its agents were exploiting the wrappers. This crystallised into a demand that the government should import the tobacco and distribute it to village organisations who would then make it available to the wrappers on much better terms than those which the company and its agents were willing to offer. The government decided to make some part of the total quantity imported available to villages in this way. Not every village took advantage of this decision but in Remuna, at the time that I left, the Co-operative Society and the Rural Development Society were engaged in a tussle as to who should handle the production of beedi in the village.

These then are the five enterprises in which village entrepreneurs attempt to turn to their advantage the needs of an external market. It will be noticed that outsiders figure prominently in these - one of them has no connection with the village while sons-in-law, originally from other villages, figure in three cases. The comparative absence of the landowners from this field of investment will also have been seen. They risk a loss of status if they start a venture with a low level of capital. The selling may not present a problem; in

such a situation production would be low and the area of sales would not extend much further than the neighbouring villages. This would enable the landowner to make his sales through people who stand in a subordinate relation to him. Even so, the investment is one which does not accord with this status.

If the level of capital is high so is output, working capital and risks. External contacts are then vital in the sale of the product. To deal with outsiders in their own territory as the sellers of a product is, for the landowner, an unwelcome experience. To negotiate with a small retailer is demeaning; if a large regional or country-wide organisation is involved this might show up the landowner's lack of strength in relation to the outside world.

To some extent he faces a dilemma. Small-scale production is a profitable line of business but it brings with it the problem of selling. Its advantages in terms of giving employment is doubtful, for only in exceptional cases is this high, even at the highest level of capital that the landowners can manage. These ventures may also demand a pattern of employment different tothat followed thus far by the landowner and which both he and his employees have found reasonably satisfactory.[13] If a considerably higher level of capital were possible some of these difficulties would disappear; selling for instance, could be handed over to somebody else, and paid for. As it is, the preference is to remain securely

in home territory and to continue to make investments in land. It is the interplay of these forces which the failure of the metal-crushing business (the one business in which a landowner was involved) reveals. These problems do not affect those who are at levels of the society well below that of the landowner. They undergo, what in the landowner's view is humiliation at the hands of outsiders, so as to secure internal gains.

Apart from the profits that they make these businesses are evaluated by the community in terms of four factors; the quantum of employment that they provide, the level of capital, whether the raw material is local or whether it is brought in from outside (the latter being regarded as indicating a more sophisticated form of production), and whether the product is intended for a market that is at the most regional or whether it is intended for an urban market as well. The extent to which these factors have influenced Remuna's choice of ventures can be fully determined only through a comparative study of several similar contexts, their economic characteristics and those of the markets which they are seeking to exploit. The particular blend of non-economic and economic factors can best be inferred through this type of regional study. It seems clear though that a business whose production is geared to the urban market has little chance of success, when its capital is small, and when it has to bring all its raw material in from outside.

This is what the owner of the handloom business has discovered. Such an enterprise is, then, merely producing in the village what is done better in the urban areas, the only (very limited) advantage being the slightly lower cost of labour.

All these ventures except for the beedi-making have not progressed very far beyond the nascent stage. The employment that they provide is limited and so correspondingly is the following of the owner. The owners direct all their energies towards their businesses, and have not felt it necessary to use such power as they have to manipulate village affairs so as to serve their business ends. However, their growing power is being taken note of by the village, and as was seen, some antagonism is building up towards them. They are criticised for being people who are not sufficiently concerned about the welfare of the village and who are pursuing selfishly the goals of wealth and income. It is to deflect criticism of this type (potentially more extreme as he is a Berawa) that the lime-kiln owner holds his annual pinkama. Those who, having begun with very limited capital, ultimately succeed in business must tread warily if they are to avoid being labelled upstarts. They must also do so even if there is no suggestion, as is the case with the shopkeepers, that their wealth has been made at the expense of the community. This applies particularly to the members of the minority castes.

In these circumstances it is interesting to speculate on the directions in which the entrepreneurs will expand in the event of their ventures achieving substantial success. Thus far the general trend of economic expansion has been horizontal, i.e. into other ventures within the village. For instance, shopkeepers did not open new shops in other villages when expansion became possible but instead bought land, planted rubber, invested in rice hulling machines and so on - all within the village. The indications are that the entrepreneurs will also follow this pattern. While they like to try their hand at ventures which are new to the village, there is little likelihood that these will expand into an urban or even regional sphere of operation. They are tools in a struggle that is essentially internal.

This is likely to be so even in the Berawa case. While the Goigama frown upon members of their own caste who work for the lime-kiln owner, he is held up as something of a model for the more aggressive among the Berawa because of his humble attitude. This has given him a niche in the village - one that he is not likely to improve upon in any context in which the Berawa are, as in Remuna, a small minority.

IV External Trade

What opportunities of trade and investment beyond

its boundaries, is Remuna able to exploit? Those with very limited capital go in for trading at the weekly fairs which are held in many villages in the region, neighbouring villages choosing different days of the week. A variety of items are brought for sale - livestock, textiles, vegetable and garden produce, hardware and latterly even ice cream. The trader buys his stock in his own village, in villages where the particular item is plentiful or from retailers in the towns. He may also sell items which he has made or produced himself. At the fair he will probably purchase goods which can be sold at a profit in the towns and even at other fairs. His success lies in knowing the varying prices which are paid for the same commodity in different parts of the region.

The Goigama and the Vahumpura both engage in this form of trading. To many this is the first step on a road which they hope will eventually lead to the ownership of a sizable store in the village. They are encouraged in this hope by the fact that one of the most successful shopkeepers began in this way, with (so the story goes), just enough capital to buy a single day's stock. The majority do not stick long at it, seeing it as a tiring occupation in which profits are not commensurate with effort and in which expenditure may at any moment make inroads into capital. Others settle down to treating it as a useful supplementary income. This is how the old stagers

regard it; they spend as much time on cultivation as their small extents require and set out once or twice each week to the fairs. At the present time when the proportion of purchases made at the fairs is less than what it was, this independent style of commerce is coming to be viewed as being more appropriate to a previous era.

In earlier times an extension of this type of business was the bullock-cart trade between regions. Coconuts were taken to areas in the interior in which they cannot be grown and the produce of the place was brought back, often for ultimate sale to Colombo and the towns of the coastal belt. Later this was done by one or two in the village who used hired lorries for the purpose but have now given it up. Profits are high but they have found that it is necessary to possess their own fleet of vehicles in addition to having a level of capital which only the landowners can invest.

It is agreed on all sides that it is easier to be a shopkeeper in another village than in one's own To be a success one must, it is said, be an outsider. An outsider, on this view, is a person who does not figure in the networks of the village, who is therefore detached from the rest of the population and in whose case business relations do not conflict with personal

ones. A shopkeeper is therefore, ideally, a person who takes no part in the status struggle within the community.[14] The bulk of the people must not see him as either an equal or a rival. To achieve this fully the shopkeeper must not only be an outsider; to complete his insulation he must take one of two extreme positions. He must either establish his dominance or else proclaim and demonstrate his willingness to play a subordinate role in the community.

This appears to explain why shopkeepers who have been reasonably successful in Remuna do not favour the idea of expanding their business into other villages. Their resources are not likely to be sufficient for them to adopt an authoritarian approach in the new village. Therefore, if they want to succeed there is little alternative but to show the required degree of humility. But if they do so they would negate the gains of status which they have already made in their own villages. Thus the people who have gone out and made a success of shopkeeping in other villages are not those who have followed the same line of business in Remuna.

This is an aspect on which accurate data is somewhat difficult to obtain. My impression is that the numbers who have left Remuna for this purpose are somewhat smaller than the figure for the more urbanised villages of the south-west coast. Those who have taken to this line of business appear to fall into three

categories. Some have already given it up, having done it perhaps when they were bachelors, and have now returned to the village. Then there are others who are at it still. They come back to the village periodically and hope to return finally when they are in a position to achieve a level of status much higher than the one in which they were at the time of leaving the village. The third category consists of people whose contacts with the village, now sporadic, will gradually cease altogether. In effect they are emigrants.

The majority, particularly those in the first two categories, have gone out to villages which are neither very far from, nor very near to, Remuna.[15] They are mostly people who have little in the way of land, capital or education. Through this means they have attempted to avoid the uncertain existence of those who are dependent on an over-supplied labour market.

In caste terms, the percentage is higher among the Vahumpura than among the Goigama, particularly in the third of the categories previously described. The Vahumpura appear also to have gone further afield than the Goigama. They have done this in order to go to regions, either in which their caste is better represented or in the commerce of which it has got a foothold. None of these shopkeepers, whether Goigama or Vahumpura appear to have left the village with any capital. Most of them have gone, in the first instance, to assist in the

business of some relative or other contact and have started out on their own later on. The Radaw and the Berawa do not figure in this.

The impact that these traders have on Remuna while still engaged in their business activities in other villages depends on several factors. The financial contributions that they make to their parents and other members of the family is one of these. The purchase of land, the fullest benefit from which will be derived only on their eventual return to the village, is also important. So also is the number of employees, usually relatives, who are recruited from Remuna. Less substantial, but perhaps more dramatic than these, is the aura of affluence which they generate on their visits home through the clothes they wear, the gifts that they bring and so on.

Their position when they return finally will depend on the capital that they have been able to amass and the use to which they put it in a Remuna context. In this respect they are better placed than the local shopkeepers who cannot, as we have seen, increase their income and build up their wealth without arousing the hostility of the community. However among those who have returned to the village after a spell of this type of trading there is nobody who has done as well as the more successful shopkeepers in Remuna.

What are the landowner preferences in business and trade? Here the landowners fall into two groups. The business activities of those who belong to families which have been landowners for two or three generations have centred around the plantation. When the British company which first began it moved into the village in the early years of the century these were the people to whom they entrusted a series of specific tasks. The landowners undertook the construction of buildings and the supply of provisions. Though the plantation changed hands about thirty years ago and even though the volume of business which it now provides is very limited, this tradition continues. Apart from this their other activities are limited and they are village-bound in their approach. One or two have dabbled in the timber and firewood trades, apparently more from a desire to give employment than to make a profit.[16]

The other set are first generation landowners who have made their money in business - mainly in transport and in the building trade. But when they reach what they regard as a satisfactory position they appear to be content, and the initiative which they must have once shown is no longer in evidence. One of them has a few interests such as a petrol service station but there is little exploitation of other opportunities.

The other investments of the landowners do not reveal a very different pattern. Only one among them has had sufficient capital to purchase a plantation; the others, though not up to this level, are well able to buy smaller properties in other parts of the region. But only two such purchases have been made; they have preferred to pay much higher prices, exorbitant by a valuer's standard, in the village itself. The majority of the landowners, and also others who aspire to this position, feel that this is a type of investment which has several disadvantages. The benefits derived from providing employment in the village itself is lost. The authority needed to manage a property in an area which is not one's own is something they feel they will be unable to establish. They also argue that such a property will not benefit from the close supervision which it would be given if it were in Remuna, which no doubt is true. As for other types of investment, the possibilities of urban commerce is outside their ken and they have little knowledge of such fields as the share market. Many of them do not even run a bank account and savings are deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank.

When the opportunities which Remuna has had are considered - regular bus and other transport services for over fifty years, proximity to Colombo, an early introduction to plantation agriculture and the commerce which builds up

around it - its record in trade and business, viewed from a purely economic standpoint, is poor. This has been particularly so during the post-war period. The landowners have shown a strong inclination to deploy their resources within the boundaries of the village, mainly in land. The confidence generated by these resources has been insufficient for them to enter into business relations with outsiders. As these contacts have not been forged, they have little knowledge of the possibilities of the external market which in turn keeps their economic strength, at the best, static. Such enterprise as the village has shown has come from the other sectors but the effect of this has been limited. The income which has flown into the village through seizing the opportunities of trade has had little impact on relative positions. In particular the number of land sales which have come about in this way is small - much less than what external employment has produced.

V External Employment

Employment in extra-village contexts is sought by all levels in the village. Education and training are seen as the avenues through which this is achieved. This view has received something of a jolt in the last few years through the failure of even university graduates to secure appropriate jobs.[17]

The type of employment which has been obtained so far is broadly of two kinds. The first is working for small concerns and for individuals within easy reach of Remuna, mainly in and around Horana. A few go further to Colombo and elsewhere for the same type of work. The other kind is working in government departments, in state-assisted organisations and in the large commercial establishments in Colombo and other centres.

Even though Remuna has produced several university graduates it has still to produce professional men and senior administrators, so that education has not yet led up to the high incomes of doctors, lawyers and engineers. In the type of employment that the best educated in Remuna can secure, the strong preference is to live in Remuna and commute to the urban centres. In some cases this is not possible. The teachers for example are posted to schools in distant regions. Some of those who have to leave the village in this way are fortunate in that they can come home for the week-end; others can manage only the vacation, while yet others pay an occasional visit while they go from posting to posting, returning on retirement to the village.

What is the nature of the employment which is found in and around Horana? Some work in shops and restaurants. The plantations provide work for labourers, technicians, supervisers and clerical workers. There are managers of small properties. A fair percentage are

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drivers - of lorries and taxis as well as of private cars. A few are newspaper sellers, working on commission in the area allotted to them by the agent in Horana. There are also mechanics and technicians. Those who go out to Colombo and to other regions do so mainly as drivers and as shop assistants and waiters.

These jobs are obtained chiefly through contacts of various types - in other villages and in Horana - and through the influence of patrons. Some of those who have taken to these occupations have done so because they desperately need to add to their income from the land and because it has not been possible to do this in the most convenient way - working in the village itself. Others have preferred to find outside employment rather than to align themselves with a patron. A third group have not been so pressed and they have been free to choose a type of employment which is in keeping with their ambitions. The range of incomes in these occupations varies but the majority do not earn more than they would from steady employment in the village itself. There are few other benefits and in general occupations of this type do not rank very high in status. The relationship with the employer is in most cases more intimate than in a strictly urban context; he is in fact a patron to whom his client has turned because of the

insufficiency of patrons in the village.

The other sort of employment - under government and in the large mercantile establishments - is regarded as definitely superior. This view relates to immediate benefits as well as to prospects and security. Remuna's penetration of the mercantile sector has been slight so that the majority of those whom I am concerned with here are in the government sector.[19] Some of them work in Horana and in the region, others in Colombo while a few are stationed elsewhere. The type of jobs include the following: teachers, clerks, overseers, storekeepers and other officials of this level in a variety of organisations, technicians and semi-skilled workers, and grama sevakas and minor officials in extension services.

The more attractive of these, such as teaching, were formerly open only to the upper levels of the village, but this is not so today, and the children of landowners have to compete with the others. The Berawa and the Radaw have had little part in this and the Vahumpura are far from happy with their share. Selection is made through the usual procedure of advertisement and interview but the village believes that success is possible only if every contact is exploited. Patrons are implored to see officials, influential relatives are mobilised and politicians are badgered, in an effort to ensure selection.

Why are these jobs so much sought after? By

village standards the pay is high. When a family income, which is just sufficient to cover essential expenditure, is increased by a salary of these dimensions a substantial saving is achieved, even allowing for an immediate rise in consumption. Quite soon land is purchased and a house is built, or at least the old one is modernised. When this goes on for some time such people approach the landowner levels of wealth, as indeed some teachers have done. A client network is built up, for they are now people whose wealth and expenditure provides others with work.

Some of these people hold positions in the administration which enables them to perform small services and favours for their fellow-villagers. This further increases the attractions of these occupations. Some years ago quite a few of them were voted into office in village societies, in the hope that their experience of government matters would be of value to the village. A few are still prominent in the Co-operative Society where their knowledge is valued by others who find difficulty with the accounting and other procedures which have to be followed. But there is the feeling now that they do not give of their best when entrusted with village affairs. They fall into the category of people who are "more concerned about their own welfare than about the village". Even so, their status is high and they are the envy of others. This statement, however, needs some

modification.

The Vahumpura too have obtained some of these jobs and the problems created by this are best seen with reference to the teachers. The Vahumpura teachers feel that the village should treat them with the respect that a teacher deserves irrespective of his caste. The Goigama agree, but the respect is given grudgingly. This has led to a policy of avoidance - people of standing among the Vahumpura will visit the Goigama sectors of the village only when there is a pressing need to do so. Equally the Goigama will avoid a situation where a gesture of respect, or even the acceptance of equality, is necessary.

The other problem which needs comment relates to the employees of the state-owned Transport Board. When the bus services were nationalised in 1958 the employees of the regional companies were absorbed by the Board. This integration gave the employees more bargaining power and this in turn led to much better terms than those which the companies had offered. These companies had a reputation for attracting the village thugs, a tradition which grew out of the almost piratical approach, which operators had adopted towards each other, when bus transport first began in the area. Now, as a result of the formation of the Board these elements find themselves placed on a par with the teachers, and others of similar educational attainments, in the

matter of salary. The village does not take very kindly to this situation; it is regarded as inequitable. Owing to this background, and aggressive temperament and coarseness of manner attributed to them, the transport workers are given a status which is well below that of their economic equals. This is the Goigama situation. The Vahumpura view their transport workers somewhat differently. To them these are relatively new areas of employment and any one of them who succeeds in getting himself a job in a field, which is largely a Goigama preserve, earns the respect of the caste.

These two cases - that of the Vahumpura teachers and the transport workers - serve to emphasise an aspect of the village approach to external employment. Such employment is obtained by people from different levels of Remuna society. The village has its own 'rules' about this; it approves in some cases and disapproves in others. It has, of course, no control over selection, but makes its own adjustments through status as in the case of the transport workers. People who have the same type of external employment, and are in the same economic class, do not therefore necessarily have the same status.

This type of employment is now firmly established as the quickest method for most people of raising status. The result has been two approaches and concerns. The village is interested, expectant and critical about

government plans for increasing employment in the country generally, and more particularly in the region. This is an important factor in the formation of political preferences. It wants industries established in the area[20] and a higher intake of people from this heavily populated region into the teaching profession, the administrative services, government agencies and corporations. As it has failed to make inroads into the urban commercial sector, there is support even from the right wing for greater governmental control over large commercial concerns.

The other preoccupation is with the expansion of educational facilities, principally in the village, but also in Horana. The village is keenly interested in, and critical about, the efficiency of its school. A sure way of establishing oneself in village affairs is to expend one's energies on some school project - currently it is the building of a library.[21] Even some of those who normally take little part in the activities of village societies make it a point to attend the meetings of the parent-teacher association and to support its demands for the extension of the facilities which the school provides.

The present high figures of unemployment relate to those with a general school education and to those who have graduated in the humanities. There a rising demand for scientific and technological skills, and the

immediate need of the school, it is felt, is for the laboratory facilities necessary for the teaching of science. This can only be done if the school is raised to the level of a senior school.[22] The whole problem took on a controversial form when the district education authority had to take a decision as to which one of two schools - the one in Remuna or another in a neighbouring village - was to be given the privilege. After protracted negotiation the decision, in modified form, was given in Remuna's favour. Of course among those who do not stand to gain by these changes there are those who decry the efforts to improve the school. But such views go very much against the grain, for the value of education is widely stressed.

VI Conclusion

What inferences can be drawn from this discussion of how Remuna reacts to the economic and employment opportunities of the wider world? The most obvious of these is that entrepreneurial activity is limited, whether it is in small-scale industrial production or in organising the distribution of the produce of individual households. External employment is what is really sought. Where this is lucrative it leads to a substantial increase in status through the purchase of land, the acquisition of clients and so forth. In the context of this goal three factors are important. The government is expected to provide

the facilities for education through which the people may arm themselves with the qualifications necessary to secure employment. The government is also expected to provide the employment and is judged on its ability to do so.[23] Patrons also have a function in this. Their importance, apart from what they do within the village, depends also on their external contacts and the degree to which these can be mobilised to secure jobs for their clients and their children.

Trade and production is much less attractive. Why is this so? There is a shortage of land and external employment is difficult to obtain. In such a situation why is every trading opportunity not seized? Is it purely a lack of knowledge of the market, an insufficiency of technical know-how and the absence of capital? These are no doubt contributory factors, but it is clear that the context is not one in which enterprise is being held back because of the inability to secure the required capital. The reasons are more fundamental.

External opportunities exist because Remuna interacts with, and is influenced by, the outside world. In a general sense the village is guarded about the effects of these influences. The landowners have every interest in the village remaining a closed unit until such time as their resources are sufficient to move out - either physically or into wider spheres of activity. But the others need external resources to improve their

position within the village. Why then do large numbers avoid business? Why do they join the landowners in thinking that it is an activity to be eschewed? To determine the reason for this approach it is necessary to examine business within the more general framework of external resources.

The shortage of land in Remuna though acute has still not reached desperate levels. Landowners, at the apex of a pyramid of patronage, are just able to discharge their responsibilities as patrons. This, together with the reciprocities of the neighbourhood, is the major safeguard against contingencies. On the other hand external employment is difficult to obtain. The chances of succeeding in business, as indicated to the community by those who have attempted it, are slender. Therefore, it is still in the internal system rather than in external benefits that the majority find their security. Hence the importance of land as an arena and the keenness to obtain employment without taking up residence elsewhere.

External influences and avenues of income disturb the relations on which this security is based. Status is altered and reciprocities are disturbed. Yet for most people external income is the only avenue through which the internal position can be bettered. An ambivalent attitude is the result. This differs from the approach to land where the village is unanimous in wanting to keep out immigrants.

The extent to which a particular type of external resource (say trade) is given approval depends on the benefits it can offer - how much income, for how many people? This must offset the disruption that it causes and the corresponding lack of security that results. Gradual and evolutionary change is the ideal. Business, however, does not have this effect; change could be dramatic and its potential for disturbing the internal order is great. Success is likely to come to only a few, placing the others thereby at a disadvantage. Those who succeed may well be people without lands, capital or education. Thus business is viewed by a large sector of the community as a force which disturbs the order in which they find security, while giving them little change of achieving any gains through it.

The interests of this majority find expression in the attitude that business is disruptive. Those who take to it are seen as people who are avaricious and who show an unseemly desire to raise status. In the context of this view it is only to be expected that landowners would steer clear of it and that outsiders would be prominent as entrepreneurs. It is possible to conclude then that the numbers who take to business are small not merely because of the difficulties of capital and know-how, but because of an attitude which is the result of a complex of factors of which the difficulties of business is only one.

The people who attempt business ventures are forced to show an element of defiance. While the enterprise is being built up, and until client strength is established, they experience some isolation. If they fail they must be prepared to face some ridicule, to that in addition to business risks there are social ones as well. This situation - the number of people who go in for business and the attitudes which the community directs towards it - will continue while the relevant variables remain at their present levels. This is especially so as these attitudes do not run counter to any values which receive strong stress at the national level.[24] Change could come in one or more of the following ways: external employment could increase, thereby reducing the importance of the security provided by the internal order. Horana's expansion could spread to Remuna and the price of land might rise to levels which the village cannot afford. The capacity of landowners to function as patrons will very probably decrease. And, finally, business opportunities themselves could expand. An obvious possibility is the ancillary trade which will be promoted by the siting of large industries in the region.

Let me now recapitulate this argument. I am suggesting that in Remuna the percentage of those who take to business is a function of an ethos and of a set of values, which have resulted through the interplay of

several forces. While personality factors play a part in determining which individuals comprise this percentage there is a clear indication that those whose connection with the village is peripheral are prominent among them. The general argument is equally applicable to internal trade discussed in the last chapter. If applied in wider terms it appears to explain why villages which have the same type of trading opportunities respond differently to these. In relation to this wider issue the present argument is of course only a hypothesis and must be explored much further.

So much for business. To what extent and for what reasons is external employment viewed differently? The most lucrative form of this is working for the government. High-status families have had this ambition for three or four generations. Until the first decade of this century the only post open to them was that of headman but thereafter opportunities grew beginning with teaching. State employment is thus associated with authority and with high status.

Today it is open to a much wider group. In the village view those who are endowed with intelligence, and who through effort and expenditure educate themselves, can aspire to it. There is nothing fortuitous about this; those who have the qualifications are selected by authority.[25] There is no unfairness to, or exploitation of, others. Thus external employment, apart from the exception mentioned

below, is not seen as disturbing the order; indeed in some respects it is an affirmation of it in the sense that others are following in the path of the landowners.

There is a further point. Even if this type of employment did threaten the order much more, this is a field (in contrast to business) in which many more can share. The success already achieved is greater and several others are hoping to do so. Therefore the tendency to view it as disruptive is counteracted by the benefits. Such an approach can be maintained so long as employment is not secured by those who are too low in the status scale. When this happens the community is faced with a problem. It attempts to resolve this by highlighting the disadvantageous attributes of the individuals concerned and by drawing sharp distinctions between them and others with similar employment. This is particularly so when the minority castes are involved. Such attitudes on the part of the majority lead to conflicts and, in some cases, the result has been emigration. While it cannot be argued that this was the conscious intention of the community, the attitude is nevertheless one way in which it seeks to channel the benefits of external employment. It is appropriate for some; if all have access to it the order is threatened.

In conclusion it can be said that, while the community is in general anxious to benefit from external opportunities, it seeks at the same time to control the

ways in which these influence the community. The percentage who have benefited is small; their position as mediators between the village and the outside world has still not brought about any striking departures from old values. They too pursue the accepted goals of purchasing land and building up a following within the village. But in comparison with earlier times the bases from which this is done has diversified; power and income are derived from many different sources. Status is the measure to which all these strengths are reduced - a basic scale. It is a device which has achieved a sharpened use in a situation in which the village seeks to maintain its integrity as a unit while benefiting from external influences.

Footnotes to Chapter Four

1 Even when the father is a performer, the son is sent to a master in another village to learn drumming and dancing.

2 Jealousy. See also page 120.

3 This attitude is not held by those who have already given up their caste occupation, but they are influenced by the general approach of the caste.

4 Bread has to be sold at a controlled price.

5 An episode which occurred during my time in the village revealed this very clearly. The bakery and the living quarters adjoining it were being fouled through human excreta thrown at the walls and into food. This was finally traced to the baker's nephew, who has since been put under psychiatric care, but the first reaction was an assumption that sorcery was involved. The speculations by the baker's family as to who the culprit might be, revealed many hidden antagonisms.

6 When this is in short supply due to import difficulties, state centres have priority.

7 The main part of a pinkama of this type is the recital of the scriptures and the gaining of merit thereby.

8 The food that is served to the Goigama is not cooked in the house but is purchased in a tea shop

9 The Goigama who work for him are looked down upon by the others, particularly by their nearest kin.

10 See discussion in the previous chapter.

11 See p.47

12 This type of low-grade tobacco is imported from India.

13 Those who work for a landowner may well stop this for two or three weeks during the cultivating and harvesting seasons. With industrial production, even if this be on the smallest scale, such arrangements might not be possible.

14 In many parts of Ceylon successful shopkeepers are from ethnic groups foreign to the area - Sinhalese in the north, Tamils in the south and Muslims in areas where their numbers are limited.

15 In the plantation areas of Central Ceylon shopkeepers from the maritime areas are prominent.

16 A landowner of this type from another village told me of a problem that he was faced with in relation to government contracts for the felling of timber. He had been asked to mechanise his operations. Apart from the capital involved, the difficulty was that he would have to discontinue some of the people who were working for him.

17 It will be recalled that there are five unemployed graduates in Remuna.

18 This work is open to women as well.

19 Even here Remuna's share has been rather less than that of villages of a similar type which are on the rail routes.

20 There was much disappointment when the scheme to start a hardboard factory in the area was abandoned.

21 Many an elder who was once active in village affairs claims that it was due to his particular effort that the school was first established twenty five years ago.

22 A Senior School prepares candidates for higher education.

23 These demands are not country-wide. They vary from region to region.

24 For instance, there is no strong feeling in the country that entrepreneurship and industrial production is the avenue through which it should escape from economic stagnation.

25 These views are tending to be shaken by the high rate of unemployment and the difficulties of competing for the few jobs that are available.

Chapter Five

VILLAGE POLITICS

I Introduction

In the last three chapters the village has been looked at from a particular point of view. What are the resources to which it has access? In what ways are these evaluated? How are they distributed among the community? These resources are competed for by individuals as individuals. The income that they yield and the power that results are benefits for the individual.

In this chapter I am concerned with the other avenue to power - the control of public resources. Here, the income, whatever its source may be, is intended for expenditure on projects whose aim is public benefit. But the control of this expenditure, and the benefits to be derived therefrom, are usually in the hands of a group; it may or may not be dominated by one individual. Who achieves the positions which enable them to exercise power of this type? Is it those who in the previous

chapters were revealed as the people who possess the greatest power? If so to what extent are they able to enhance their power through this particular method? If not, if it is others who control public resources, in what ways does this act as a check on more 'traditional' power?

From the village standpoint public resources are of two sorts. There is the money raised within the village itself, usually through village societies, for its own purposes. Then there are government allocations; these divide further into two categories. First there is the expenditure incurred by the Government's own departments and agencies in providing services and in initiating schemes of development. Examples of this include the building of schools and major roads and the maintenance and extension of medical services. Second, there are the sums made available by the government for work which is to be done either through the village societies or through the Village Committee.[1] The scale of this expenditure is such that more often than not its advantages are for a particular area of the village rather than for the whole of it. The improvement of village roads and the building of communal wells are instances. An added benefit is the employment that work of this type provides, temporary though it might be.

It is with the second of these categories that

I am primarily concerned; the other is somewhat remote from the village. Where the government acts through its own organisations, decisions are taken in central offices with which the village has little contact. Until recently these decisions tended to be part of some regional scheme in the formulation of which the views of any one village carried little weight. Now, however, the position is tending to change. The village recognises that these schemes are financed through limited central government votes and that pressure is necessary if its needs are to be given consideration. Village leaders are much less diffident than they were about going to the offices of government organisation in the district capital, and even in Colombo, for the purpose of arguing the village case. Anybody who does this and induces the government to spend on the village is doing the next best thing to philanthropy.

Such people have a much better chance of success if they are able to exploit the main contacts which the village has with the government. One of these is the Member of Parliament and obviously the supporters of his party have an advantage here. The other contact is the Grama Sevaka and, through him, his chief, the Divisional Revenue Officer.[2] The Grama Sevaka is often asked to report on village requests; he is the official whom government organisations contact when they need some information on the village. Those who are prominent in village

affairs therefore think it prudent to cultivate his friendship.

I want now to describe village societies briefly so as to have a background for the discussion which follows. We have already seen how some of them came into being.[3] We have also noted that their funds may come either from the government or from village subscription. What are their other significant features?

The societies in the village may be categorised as follows:

1. Societies which have statutory backing and which perform some function which is vital in the economy of the village.

2. Societies which are encouraged and aided by the government but which are not essential in the same sense as those in the previous category. If they are active, they can extend the amenities of the village and provide services which are useful.

3. Societies which have been started through village initiative but whose strength lies either in their connection with some outside organisation or in their intention to coerce the administration into a course of action beneficial to the village.

4. Societies which are concerned with mobilising village effort for village purposes.

The two societies in the first category are the Co-operative Society and the Cultivation Committee. The principal importance of the Co-operative Society to the

village is that it is the channel through which the government distributes foodstuffs and other commodities which are in short supply due to the difficulties of foreign exchange. It is primarily a consumer's co-operative. The handling of paddy is its main activity on the producer side. The cultivator is aided with loans, fertiliser is provided at reduced rates and the paddy is purchased by the society on behalf of the government.

It has attempted to expand its producer activities but so far there has been little success.[4] From time to time it also undertakes building and constructional work. It is debating whether to obtain a loan from the Central Agency for the purchase of a lorry. The idea is that the vehicle should bring in a considerable income, in addition to taking care of the Society's own transport. This is handled at present by one of the landowners.

What are the advantages of controlling such a society? Its committee handles, what is by village standards, a large sum of money. This will be particularly so if projected capital expenditure (the Society is hoping to obtain another loan and erect its own buildings) becomes a reality. It provides some employment, especially when construction work is in progress. The society is a weapon through which to make incursions into areas of economic activity which thus far have been

the preserve of the village capitalists. The committee also has some control over the distribution of scarce commodities and allegations are not infrequent that this is done in such a way so as to benefit the committee and its supporters.

Some of the functions of the Cultivation Committee have already been noted. It adjudicates in disputes which arise over the ownership and sharecropping of paddy land. It should maintain and improve the irrigation system. It is expected to co-ordinate all activities connected with cultivation and to take measures such as spraying pesticides which will increase productivity. For these tasks it receives government assistance - financial as well as in the form of expertise. It is also empowered to collect some revenue from the cultivators.

Thus the power of the Cultivation Committee is substantial. It can take decisions over the wealth and income of people. Its regular, and not inconsiderable, income enables it to undertake constructional and maintenance work which provides employment. It can perform its appointed task, of keeping the irrigation system in good repair, in a manner which benefits some fields more than others.

Among those which fall into the second category are the Rural Development Society, the Community Centre and the Credit Society. The government organisations which promote them allow these societies to be started for

any meaningful unit - either for the whole village or for a division within it. The Vahumpura have taken advantage of this and they have their own parallel societies. The potential of societies of this type can best be examined by considering the functions and problems of the main Rural Development Society in the village. Although the Vahumpura have their own Rural Development Society this is open to them as well. It is, in fact, supported by some of them who do not live in the neighbourhood in which their own society is located.

The Rural Development Society can undertake a range of activities - the construction of buildings such as a village hall and extensions to the school, building roads in those areas of the village which are now served only by footpaths, the promotion of cultural activities, devising schemes for the welfare of the needy and organising patrols for village safety. From the government's point of view the important principle here is the one of self-help; the village has to contribute the labour while the government, where necessary will bear the other expenses.

The Remuna experience has been that the degree of activity of the Rural Development Society depends on a series of factors. It must be spearheaded by a leader who has a large following. He must have sufficient contact with the authorities to ensure that the government

contribution to a project is substantial. His own contribution must not be limited merely to giving up his time; while others give their labour he must provide food and refreshment. The project itself must be such that it benefits a sizable sector of the village. Leaders are not powerful enough to mobilise people for a project which has no direct advantage for them.

Among the societies in the third category are the political ones as well as a society which has been started by those who have acquired blocks of government land.[5] The purpose of the latter society is to pressurise the government into accepting the residents as legal owners. They also want proper roads constructed to the blocks. These societies have hardly any income. Although their aim is to be unceasingly active they come alive only on specific issues. The support that they receive rests on the effectiveness of the external connection. This in turn depends on the brokering capacities of the office-bearers, particularly in the political societies.

In the fourth category are the societies which receive no external aid and which have no external connections. There is a sports society, several religious societies (associated with each of the temples and with the devale) and also a Funeral Aid Society. This works, what is in effect a scheme of insurance against the expenditure that a funeral entails. The religious

societies are nominally supported by all, but the extent to which they are active is determined by political factors.[6] Village contributions are the source of their income and this is occasionally supplemented by efforts such as fancy bazaars. There is little power to be derived from being an office-bearer in any of these societies. It merely underlines the power of those who already have it.

This brief outline should have made it clear that although the other societies have their uses, the three main societies from the point of view of effective power in the village are the Co-operative Society, the Cultivation Committee and the Rural Development Society. The election of office-bearers takes place annually. Only owners and cultivators of paddy land can vote in the case of the Cultivation Committee, while voting rights in the Co-operative Society are restricted to those who have become members through the purchase of shares. In the Rural Development Society there are no restrictions, except that of village residence. Where a society is open to the whole village, the Vahumpura have little say in the control of its affairs,the other two castes none at all.

II Cliques and Clusters

Who, then, are the people who control the village societies? One type of group that is important in village politics is what I shall call a cluster - a patron

and his clients. Some of the features of the patron-client relationship have been noted as they appeared in different contexts. Let me now describe this in more generalized terms.

A patron is expected to help his client in a variety of ways. He is assisted financially if he wants to purchase land or build a house. This is usually in the form of a loan although a small part of this may be a gift. It is to a patron that a client turns in times of crisis - whether it be an illness, litigation or a funeral. So it is in marriage - the patron's gift is counted upon and in addition a loan may also be obtained from him. He will be asked to intercede if the client gets into difficulties with the police. The patron is expected to use his power so as to settle disputes in the client's favour. One of the most important of all his functions is to use his external contacts to obtain employment for his clients and his dependants.

In return the client has to do more than merely work for his pay. He and his family are expected to gather round if there is a crisis; they are the helpers at rituals, marriages and funerals. A client supports the patron in all internal political issues, especially when the latter is active in village politics. This support is not expected over national issues which agitate the village at the time of parliamentary elections. The respect in which the client holds the patron is

expressed at the time of the New Year through the offering of betel leaves - the traditional way of paying homage.

We have seen that those who work his lands are a landowner's clients. Craftsmen may also be among them. In the case of a Goigama landowner people in these two categories could be from either the Vahumpura or the Goigama castes. He will also have a Radaw who performs for his household those functions which are the province of the latter's caste. The Berawa, as seen earlier, enter into these relationships only to a very limited extent and have few landowner patrons.

Besides this there are others who are clients even though they do not perform services for which they are paid by the landowner. They are frequently to be seen at the landowner's house during their leisure hours and they help, when this is needed, very much as do other clients. Their political support is often very marked. Some of them enjoy a considerably higher status than the average client and what they expect from the landowner is correspondingly different. They do not seek his help to deal with contingencies. His external contacts and his influence with the administration are of value to them, but more important they would like to use him as a ready source of credit when they want to improve their assets in land.

Such people may themselves have a client or two and in this sense it would be correct to describe the

patron-client relationship in the society as having a pyramidal aspect. A client of one could be something of a patron to another. Thus incipient clusters are many even though the established ones are few. The solidarity of these latter ones, the extent to which obligations are fulfilled, depends on the economic and political power of the patron. In a large cluster the patron is always a landowner.

The other type of group which figures in village politics is best described as a clique. It has a core of people whose economic strength is more or less equal. This strength varies from clique to clique but even in the richest ones the level is considerably lower than that of a landowner. The affairs of the clique are directed by this inner ring; at times one of them is marked off as the leader. Around this ring are the supporters. In most cases both the core and the supporters are either from one neighbourhood or from two or three adjacent ones. Cliques are confined, with one exception, to a single caste.

A supporter may have a special connection with a member of the inner ring. When this is markedly so the clique is in fact an agglomeration of small clusters. This makes it somewhat less stable than the large clusters headed by the landowners. As the leaders of a clique increase their financial strength and improve

their status there is a tendency for them to think in terms of their own clusters. The other factor which tends to disturb its stability is that its members are neighbours. They are likely to have shares in the same lands and the inescapable tensions of this situation may tend to weaken the bonds of clique-membership. A further factor is that the leaders may disagree as to how the patronage of the societies which they may control is to be distributed. Each might want to press the claims of his own supporters. The greatest solidarity is achieved when the leaders function as if they were a single patron.

These, then, are the two sets of groups with which we need to be concerned. The level of income of those who comprise the inner ring of an important clique is such that they do not need to play client to a landowner. This role is not compatible with the notion which they have of their position in the community. Yet their resources are insufficient to set themselves up as full-fledged patrons. They are unable to help people in times of crisis or to provide them with work on the scale that a landowner does. Other methods for building up a following have to be found and for this village societies are a very good answer. Where the society is directly aided by the government and where its resources are much higher than the average, some

employment is provided by the projects that it undertakes. Supporters derive other benefits from its day-to-day working. It can be the instrument through which demands are made to the administration for better amenities and services.

The advantages to the leaders are many. As office-bearers of the societies they acquire authority and they build up a following. Through meeting government officials they widen their external contacts, even beyond the range of those of the landowners. Altogether they achieve an appreciable rise of status. They cannot, however, aspire to this position unless they have some following and are accepted as people of some standing. As the importance of village societies increases the village is becoming more insistent on this. It will also not accept claims to office, unless those who offer their services possess the appropriate skills for conducting society affairs efficiently. For this reason cliques are anxious to draw in people who have experience of administrative matters, through working in government organisations, even though they have little popular support.

The view is gaining ground in the village that cliques run societies better than clusters. The point to be emphasised is that the control of societies is vital if a clique is to achieve prominence in the village. Such control is not quite as important for a cluster, though it is necessary to prevent a clique from gaining

control. When a large cluster controls a society it has two sets of resources - the society's and that of the landowner who heads the cluster. The drive that the cluster exhibits must come from the landowner, for his clients are much less skilled in village affairs than the leaders of a big clique. The tendency is for the landowner to direct the greater part of his energies into his own affairs and to leave the society largely unexploited. If, however, the society is controlled by a clique the two sets of resources are in competition. This narrows the patronage gap between the landowner and the leaders of the clique. If he attempts to maintain the gap he strains his resources; if he does not there is the danger that before long his following will begin to diminish.

This is the basis of the conflict in village societies. However, it is not always a situation in which one cluster is opposed by one clique. Various alliances emerge. Small cliques join large clusters. Three or four small clusters may coalesce into a large clique. Cliques may be opposed not only by clusters but also by other cliques. It is seldom, though, that large clusters oppose each other.

III Cliques, Clusters and Other Groups

How do cliques and clusters relate to the other groups in the society? In what ways and at what points

is there conflict over allegiance? Let me begin with caste.

There are many aspects of their position in the village which the Vahumpura would like to see changed. They complain that when they visit a Goigama household, on those occasions when such a visit cannot be avoided, they are not offered a chair but are, instead, given a small stool. Another grievance is that at Goigama weddings they are segregated from the Goigama guests. Vahumpura students say that the Goigama who mix freely with them outside the village - in school and university - drop this friendliness on their return. A recent conflict has arisen over names. The Vahumpura can be recognised through their names and the more ambitious of them have attempted to change these to less distinctive ones.[7] This is regarded as effrontery by the Goigama and in one instance provoked strong reaction.

The Vahumpura expected this situation to change with the expansion in the opportunities for external employment, but this has not happened to the extent that they anticipated. Their other line of hope was government assistance to the village through its societies. This they hoped would lead to a decided improvement in their economic position. When the societies first began in the village over twenty years they were keen if watchful participants in their activities. The Co-operative Society was started largely on their initiative.

In the early stages they held office in this as well as in others, but were later edged out by the larger Goigama vote. They realised then that there was little support for their attempts to work the societies on a village, rather than sectarian, principle. They were forced, therefore, to adopt the same approach.

There are two cliques among the Vahumpura. Each of these cliques draws its support from one of the two neighbourhoods which are occupied solely by them. There is also a cluster around their only landowner but his position is deteriorating and he finds it increasingly difficult to meet his obligations as a patron. The cluster is tending to merge with one of the cliques. In both cliques there are people who work for the Goigama landowners and who are therefore members of the large clusters. Thus all three groups are weak.

The two cliques are in conflict with each other, both over the control of their own societies and about the degree to which the Vahumpura should participate in the activities of the Goigama-controlled societies. One clique wants the Vahumpura to dissociate themselves as much possible from these and to work through their own societies. They are only held back because some of them have to support the Goigama clusters to which they belong, either when such clusters take office in a village society or when they become active on a particular issue. The other clique argues for co-operation with the Goigama

clusters, hoping for the day when caste divisions will not operate in village affairs. The members of this clique live in a neighbourhood which is much nearer the centre of the village than the other. It is more difficult for them to avoid contact with the Goigama.

Both cliques are hostile to the Goigama cliques and give them no support. The immediate cause of this is an incident which I shall describe later, but there is a more fundamental reason. The Vahumpura are willing to accept positions as inferior members of a Goigama cluster because there are compensating economic advantages. The support of a Goigama clique gives them no such benefit. The resources of a society which such a clique may control is seldom sufficient for the inner ring to meet its obligations to its Goigama supporters as well as to the Vahumpura. From the Vahumpura standpoint the only inducement would be if they were accepted as equals but the leaders of Goigama cliques find this unthinkable. The whole purpose of controlling societies is to be accepted by the village as the equals of the landowners and to be as much above the Vahumpura as are the landowners. Thus to treat the Vahumpura as equals is to act in a manner which runs counter to the direction in which they want to move.

The only Vahumpura support which any of the Goigama cliques receive is from the landowner. He has been elected to the Cultivation Committee by the clique

which controls this. The authorities would like to be assured that the Committee is a representative one. As there is a fair percentage of Vahumpura owners and cultivators it is felt that there should be at least one Vahumpura on the Committee. The clique has selected the landowner as the Vahumpura leader most likely to fall in with their wishes. As seen already the landowner's cluster is disintegrating. He can expect no equality from a Goigama cluster if he were to align himself, along with the remnants of his own cluster, with one of these. His political sympathies are with the left and he may have felt that he had a better chance of equality with the left-oriented clique. In the views of the other Vahumpura his hopes have been belied and he has seriously let down the caste.

As we have seen the Berawa connections with landowners are limited; a few of them have peripheral positions in clusters. The possibilities of having an impact on village affairs through developing their own cliques is remote. They are likely to gain even less than the Vahumpura by joining the Goigama cliques but some of them do so, though not very actively, for another reason.

The Berawa have little hope of improving their position through the village societies and their expectations are centred around measures taken at the national level. They feel that schemes which are of

advantage to them are more likely to be introduced by the left parties. This is their line of support in national politics and it is as an extension of this that the Goigama cliques are supported.

The Radaw approach is different; they compete with each other for the custom of the village. As such there is little likelihood of effective cliques emerging amont them, even if there was an immediate political advantage to be gained from it. At the same time support for other cliques and clusters may also put their custom in jeopardy. Too obvious an alignment with a patron or a leader of a clique might anger others. An occasional gesture of support for an important patron is all that they will allow themselves. Those who have given up the traditional occupation avoid village affairs altogether.

The general picture then is that clusters cut across caste lines. Cliques are, by and large, confined to a single caste and exist only among the Vahumpura and the Goigama. On major issues there is a tendency for the Goigama cliques to join forces against the clusters. The two Vahumpura cliques demonstrate great solidarity when the issue is one of the Vahumpura versus the Goigama; this issue is avoided by the landowners and their clusters - it is the cliques who take it up on behalf of the Goigama.

A neighbourhood is usually confined to a single caste.[8] The ideal that there should be good relations between neighbours is often stressed. It is felt that quarrels between them, however acrimonious they may be while they last, should be resolved quickly because reciprocity and co-operation are vital. Neighbours are needed in the event of a crisis, especially if other connections such as those of kinship, are not likely to be particularly helpful. These are the people with whom labour is exchanged most - in agricultural work, preparing for rituals, thatching a roof and so on. But proximity produces its problems; a frequency of relations brings with it a frequency of quarrels. If there is damage to property or if sorcery is suspected neighbours are the most likely culprits. Outright violence is also more frequent among neighbours. Thus there are two forces at work - the value of reciprocity on the one hand and the need to protect one's interests on the other.

Not in all neighbourhoods are these two factors handled in the same way. In a few there is the feeling that they have been treated indifferently and that the rest of the village has not taken cognisance of their achievements. Neighbourhood sentiment is higher in these and the residents derive more from reciprocal relations.

In the majority, however, solidarity surfaces only on specific issues.[9] At other times the quality of neighbourhood relations covers a wide spectrum. At one end there is great cordiality and mutual assistance while at the other there is continuing hostility. Land is either the root or the focus of the conflict. Close kinsmen could be anywhere on the spectrum as indeed could others, so that there is no particular pattern in these relations. A small neighbourhood will very probably consist entirely of close kin - descendants of a common ancestor in about the third ascending generation.[10]

Even though there are many conflicts in a neighbourhood and even though an individual does not enjoy relations of amity with everybody else, this is, nevertheless, that area of the village in which he can develop his closest relations. It is with neighbours more than with others that he has the security of reciprocity. In part at least it is with them that he "insures" himself against contingencies.

For some people, therefore, the neighbourhood is an alternative to cliques and clusters; it provides what may be termed communal patronage. The choice between supporting cliques and clusters on the one hand, and pursuing neighbourhood relations on the other, arises because time is limited. If a person is to be recognised as belonging to a clique or a cluster he has to devote his leisure to participating in a variety of activities -

attending meetings, helping with community projects and so forth. If he is fully employed as well he has little time in which to help his neighbours in tasks which are of individual, more immediate benefit. Other factors remaining equal, one may therefore expect to see a weakening of neighbourhood relations if cliques and clusters were to gain in strength. It is important to note here that at present the percentage of those who have firm connections with cliques and clusters is considerably less than half of the total number of household heads.

The fact that some people have to decide between cliques and clusters and a greater involvement in the affairs of the neighbourhood, does not imply that there is no connection between the three types of units. A clique draws its support from a large neighbourhood or from a group of adjacent ones. A precondition for the emergence of a clique is a marked increase in the wealth, and in the level of education, of about half a dozen people who live in that part of the village. The recognition accorded to this improvement in status by the landowners and their supporters is seldom pleasing to those who have achieved it. This induces in them the hope that with their combined strength they can challenge the established leadership. It is in this way that a clique takes shape. It begins in a nieghbourhood because it is here that the limited support of the new leaders is concentrated.

A small neighbourhood seldom throws up enough

leaders to form the nucleus of a clique. But even if this were to happen the leaders are unlikely to detach themselves sufficiently from the conflicts of such a neighbourhood to achieve identity as a clique. Thus, there are no small, united, neighbourhoods which form themselves into cliques around their leaders so as to obtain a better share of village resources. The gains which can be achieved by submerging their differences are limited. A neighbourhood of this type has little chance of influencing village affairs unless its leaders command support well beyond its boundaries. If this were so they may well be landowners and the question of a clique would not arise. It is only among the Vahumpura that cliques have formed in small neighbourhoods. But here 'small' is a misleading term. They have three neighbourhoods which, though small when compared with the village average, are more or less equal in size. The Vahumpura cliques have identity only in relation to each other. In the wider context of the village they act as one clique.

A cluster is not confined to a neighbourhood but is strongly associated with one. It has an obvious focus in the landowner's residence but this is not the only reason for the association. As was seen in an earlier chapter it is an advantage for the landowner to draw his clients from his own neighbourhood when the amount of patronage that he is able to dispense is limited.[11] These are the people whom he selects as clients and with whom he

builds up his network as he begins to establish himself as a landowner. Even the bigger landowners who take the whole village as their field of patronage and attempt to distribute it widely, reserve the greater percentage of this for their own neighbourhoods.

What connection has kinship with cliques and clusters? We have already seen that one condition under which the members of a patronymic group show solidarity is when they live in one neighbourhood, either having shares in the same large block or owning contiguous ones.[12] In such circumstances does a patronymic group evolve into a clique? This has never happened. If this is the basis on which a clique mobilises support then it must expect to be opposed by other similar groups. The approach can, therefore, be effective only if the group has the power of numbers. But then it will be dispersed and will no longer be associated with a particular locality.

Members of some patronymic groups do, however, feel that their group (and they as members of it) have too limited a voice in the affairs of the village. Others have such grievances not as members of a patronymic group but as members of family circle[13] or even as one of a group of brothers. Such feelings do not turn these groups into cliques. They are not shared by all members and besides, there are too many internal conflicts. What happens is that the individuals who feel strongly are

impelled into some political action. The grievances are transformed either into leadership or support of cliques.

The other condition under which a patronymic group has cohesion is when it has powerful people among its members. A landowner does not necessarily select those who work for him either from his patronymic group or from among his other kinsmen. But they are certainly among his clients so that a fair proportion of the cluster consists of the landowner's kinsmen. It is to the advantage of both sides to activate the existing links.

Those who work for a landowner do not do so as a group. The anda-goviyas have little connection with each other and work their fields separately. The rubber tappers work as individuals. The craftsmen work on their own. It is only on political and ritual occasions that they come together. This is not so with cliques. It will be recalled that the extent which a cultivator can work depends on the access that he has to a fund of reciprocal labour. Cliques are most useful here for much labour is exchanged between members. Indeed some cliques originated, at least partially, as work groups and for some people this benefit of clique membership is one of its major attractions.

IV Clique or Cluster - Individual Choices

The advantage of belonging to a cluster is that a member receives a share of the patronage dispensed by the landowner. As we have seen this is not greatly increased through the resources of any society that he and his cluster may happen to control. Let me now summarize the advantages of belonging to a clique - not as a member of the inner ring but as a mere supporter. Apart from the feeling that he has a voice in regulating the affairs of the village what are the more tangible benefits which the supporter enjoys?

There is the possibility of some employment. If the clique controls a society which distributes either services or commodities, the supporter can expect a share which is much higher than the average. The clique is a unit of mutual assistance in agriculture. The supporter enjoys the security of belonging to a group which controls some resources without the loss of status which the role of client involves. This security stands him in good stead in his land and other disputes, particularly as the other members of the clique live in the same area of the village. But there is one perquisite which clique membership does not carry - the possibility of obtaining a substantial loan. This is available to the

member of a cluster.

What are the patterns discernible in the choices made between cliques and clusters? What preferences are shown by the different types of people discussed in the three previous chapters? The majority of those who have their employment outside the village - a group which includes teachers, government employees and transport workers - have incomes which are substantially higher than the average. The terms under which they are employed often include fringe benefits. They do not, therefore, need the security provided by a patron in the village.

Freeing themselves from dependence on a patron is only the first step; the next is to achieve this position themselves. However, the economic strengths necessary for this role take some time to acquire. Meanwhile the only way of increasing their power in the village is by joining a clique - not in their case as a supporter but as a member of the inner ring. It would be incorrect, though, to suggest that all people so placed necessarily do so. Some do not have sufficient leisure to participate in the activities of cliques. Others are not on cordial terms with the leaders or the potential leaders of the cliques which are open to them. In such circumstances they are content with influencing the affairs of the neighbourhood and possibly with having a small cluster

around them. As a gesture of opposition towards a clique they may even support a cluster.

The entrepreneurs are similarly placed in that they do not need patrons. They differ from the above category in that they are likely to establish themselves sooner as patrons. For this reason they have no desire to assist in the decimation of the clusters. At the same time they are in competition with the landowners over clients and in conflict with them over values. This inclines them towards a position of sympathy with the cliques. But this cannot be taken far as the cliques view the ventures in which they are engaged as ones which should be co-operatively owned and managed. The result is that they keep out of village affairs.

Craftsmen and ritual practitioners face a common problem in that wide custom is important to both. If maximum income is the aim, then it is wise for them not to join either a clique or a cluster unless adequate work is assured. Indeed some who have connections with cliques or clusters attempt to play this down by stressing that their services are open to the whole village. On the other hand there are those who sacrifice some income in order to acquire a following. The demand for their services is high and they are able to establish themselves as important village figures. They turn to cliques and are valuable members of the inner ring.

The owners of the larger shops are people who have

shown a marked desire for mobility. One should perhaps expect them to figure prominently in cliques and clusters, but they face certain difficulties. It is not easy for them to join cliques because this conflicts with their business interests. For example, any expansion in the range of activities of the Co-operative Society is likely to affect them. The activity of running a shop does enable them to build up their own following and they do in fact lead small clusters. But this, as was seen in an earlier chapter, can be taken beyond a certain point only at the expense of the business and they are very far from being patrons on the landowner scale. The possibility of building up a large following is, however, there for they, more than any other group, have exchanges with a large percentage of the people. With this potential clearly evident they have no desire to play client to a landowner. Yet if there is a showdown, for instance a confrontation between two sides at the time of an election, it is with the landowners that their interests lie. So among the larger shopkeepers there is oscillation between independence and cluster membership. They also attempt to undermine the unity of the cliques (credit is a potent weapon here) and to deflect them into activities which are harmless from the standpoint of a shopkeeper's economics.

The majority of owner-cultivators (those who do not sell their labour but work only their own fields) are no longer solely dependent on agriculture for their income.

These other economic activities may well determine their clique and cluster allegiances. The few who confine themselves to agriculture are able to choose between cliques and clusters (if they choose at all) on grounds other than the need for employment. The tendency is for them to support the clusters not so much for economic reasons as for political ones. Their former position of being second only to the landowners has been undermined through the external employment which it has been possible for the village to obtain. The cliques, which are partly an expression of this change, are regarded as being hostile to their interests.

What now of the majority who do not belong to any of these categories? As a background to the attempt to understand their decisions some preliminary observations are necessary. The role of client is not one that is desired by all even when it is the easiest way out of the difficulties of inadequate income. Equally patrons do not necessarily have the maximum number of clients which their economic position would allow them to have. They can choose between the immediate increase of status through a larger number of clients or the saving, leading to investment and wealth, which a smaller number permits.

When the patron has fixed on his level of patronage he then has the problem of distributing this between

his different clients. Relative to him the clients can be viewed as being in concentric circles. Those in the inner circles have priority in the work that is going and the patron's obligations towards them are met reasonably fully. He can seldom do this for those in the outer rings nor can he provide them with all the employment that they desire. The demand for such positions are there and these are seldom vacant. But dissatisfaction may build up as these clients do not receive the full benefits of patronage, and they may settle for other alternatives. It is true to say that unless the clients in the outer circles move quickly to the inner ones there is a strong tendency for the connection to cease.

How is this viewed from the client's end? Being under-employed he has some leisure and must use this to his best advantage. If the client has to keep himself available for any work which the patron may provide his chances of making himself useful in the neighbourhood or of establishing himself in an important clique are slender. Therefore it is in his interest to cast his lot completely with the patron even to the extent of using his leisure for non-remunerative work.[14] In return he expects the full benefits of patronage; if he does not get it he will look elsewhere. This applies to cliques too; benefits have to be distributed if supporters are to be retained. There is in fact much moving around, from cluster to cluster, cluster to

clique, and clique to cluster. Equilibrium, if it is reached at all, is a dynamic one. All this emphasises the point made earlier in this section - time, though apparently plentiful, is in fact a scarce commodity.

These are the general considerations. What guides an individual's decision as to whether he joins a clique or a cluster? The general goal in terms of which all behaviour can be understood is status; the society is very explicit about this. It is, however, difficult to argue that all people in the village act so as to maximise their status. Some do; others are content with a level which is manifestly below what they can reasonably hope to attain. There are yet others who have opted out and who appear to want to negate their own attributes. Thus, even with a common denominator which is used by the society itself it is not possible to explain decision in terms of a principle of maximisation.

The facts suggest another view. Each individual has as his goal, not the maximisation of status, but a level which he has chosen for himself. In the majority of cases it is a higher level than the one enjoyed at present. Most people are, therefore, striving to improve their status, though with different degrees of effort. The goal is not a static one as aspirations are continually changing, but at any one moment it is fixed enough to give direction to activity and decision.

A full investigation of how individuals fix on

particular levels of status as their goals must be done through another discipline, and is outside the scope of this study. It can be argued, though, that a goal is strongly influenced by an individual's links and that in turn the goal necessitates the formation of new ones. Links and goal thus interact on each other producing a general direction of action. A person who is satisfied with his neighbourhood relations may not aim at a particularly high level of status and as a result cliques and clusters may hold no particular attraction for him. Another whose family has had a connection with a patron and whose first need is to increase his income may think of exploiting this link for the purpose. And somebody who has been rebuffed by a patron may decide to strengthen himself through the membership of a clique. The circumstances are various and they do not correlate easily with specific courses of action.

In the categories discussed above (i.e. government employees, craftsmen, etcetera) there were strong determinants which inclined them to a particular course. This is not so for the majority. The push of existing links is the starting point; thereafter a balance is struck between what is regarded as the best course and the opportunities which are immediately available. The choices are reasonably open with the proviso that the links must be consistent with each other. It may not be possible to forge a political connection while

maintaining at the same time a particular kinship link. Similarly, trading interests (and the links they imply) are seldom in harmony with the ideal of being a good neighbourhood man.

V Village Societies

Space does not permit a detailed account of the different societies and how control over them passes from one group to another. Many of the principles which can be drawn out from such a discussion have in fact been set out in the preceding sections. However, a few aspects need comment by way of filling in the picture.

About twenty years ago when village societies in their present variety began to get established, cliques and clusters as they are now known were not very prominent. Important men from each neighbourhood were voted into office. While some societies had sporadic bursts of activity, seldom was this the result of a sustained team effort. The landowners at times accepted presidential office but in the main the societies were run by those in the economic category immediately below them. There was no anti-landowner feeling; hostility was directed against the headman who was, at that time, the administration's only contact with the village. The attempt, of the Rural Development Society in particular;

was to build a bridge to the administration and so to check the headman's power in the village. The potential of the societies was somewhat less than it is now but even this was not fully exploited through a lack of knowledge of how best this should be done. Gradually things began to change.

Government agencies decided to use the societies much more in its attempts to stimulate village activity. The resources at the disposal of the societies increased. So also did village awareness of how best these should be utilised.

There were also other changes; relative economic positions had begun to alter. The patronage of landowners did not reach as wide a group as before. There was little improvement in their own economic strength, but the wants and range of expenditure of their clients had expanded. In most neighbourhoods external employment had produced embryo patrons. This fact together with the diminishing strength of the landowners gave the neighbourhoods a new identity. Altogether the cleavages within the village acquired a new colouring and the position of the landowners began to be challenged.

Perhaps the first clique to emerge was one which was composed largely of government employees and teachers. It also included a son of a landowner and had the support of the monks. The clique was representative of the village intelligentsia and took control of the (by then) moribund Rural Development Society. It

is clear from the record of meetings of the time that they felt that what the village needed was organisation and direction of a type which their leadership could provide. They confidently expected the people to rally behind them so that many amenities and services could be provided for the village through pressurising the government into granting aid.

At first there was considerable enthusiasm but this petered out. The village was disillusioned. The people expected the clique not merely to lead the societies but also to use some of their new increases of income for the general benefit - in short to behave as patrons. The leaders of the clique were not willing to give their money but only their time and were depending on the society's resources and the society's goals to build up their support. From their own point of view the choice of the society was unfortunate. As seen earlier, the Rural Development Society is one in which success can be achieved only if the leaders have already established their following.

Later these leaders found it difficult to give even their time. It became clear that many of the projects which they had planned needed much effort before they could be pushed through to a successful conclusion. Ultimately they withdrew from village societies and gave all their energies to their own endeavours. They have their own small clusters and they are agitated

by the issues of national politics but their interest in village societies is limited to undermining the position of other cliques. The major result of their attempt at running a village society was to demonstrate an approach; before long other neighbourhoods were thinking in terms of cliques.

The Co-operative Society has had a different history and it has been the last one to lose its non-partisan character. It is also the oldest of the village societies. In the mid-fifties the society was only a short step away from bankruptcy. A group drawn from among the richer people in the village, and headed by a landowner, was entrusted with the task of putting it back on its feet. This was done. A few years later there was dissatisfaction about the running of the society but no attempts were made even obliquely to gain control in view of the past history of the society. The landowner then found that the society was taking up too much time without giving him any substantial return. He decided to give it up even though some of his fellow office-bearers wanted to turn it into a cluster affair. Once again the society was entrusted to a group of prominent people representing the different sectors and interests of the village. They could not do any more than just keep it ticking over but by this they demonstrated that its viability was no longer in question. When criticism mounted once more the time was ripe for

a clique to take it over.

We discussed in outline, at the beginning of this chapter, the functions of the main societies. In their day to day working what decisions do they have to take, and what problems do they face in doing so? In the course of three consecutive meetings, the committee of the Rural Development Society took the following decisions: to widen three footpaths into roads suitable for vehicular traffic; to construct two bathing wells, obtaining government assistance for the purchase of the necessary materials; to write to the local office of the Transport Board requesting it to strengthen the bus service between Horana and Remuna during rush hours; to set up a sub-committee to suggest ways and means of combating the menace of illicit brews.

This is a fair sample of what the Rural Development Society attempts to do. One and a half years later the roads were only half done, the bus service showed little improvement, only one well had been constructed and the sub-committee had all but ignored its tricky assignment. For decisions such as these to be carried through successfully the society needs popular support, government assistance or both. A limited amount of constructional work was done during this period because the landowner who controlled the society got his clients together and had something of a tamasha at

the end of each day of voluntary labour.

The position of the Cultivation Committee is different. The following matters came up before one of its monthly meetings: an anda-goviya made an application that his son should be registered as the anda-goviya of a particular field in his place.[15] A cultivator complained that his fields were being flooded through the excess water of an adjoining field. And an owner alleged that he was being wrongfully deprived of the use of one of his own shares. The Committee has the authority under law to decide on these matters and enjoys a certain freedom in doing so. If it sticks within certain limits in using its power, it does not have to be overly dependent on the authorities nor need it woo the village. However, if these limits are exceeded and the village reacts, it has to look to the officials for support.

There is seldom any conflict within the committees of the different societies in reaching decisions. Committee members belong to the same clique or cluster and present a united front to the rest of the village. The difficulty is one of rallying sufficient support to execute the decisions that they take. The leaders of the societies have to be powerful within the village, and they must have influence outside it, if the societies are to overcome the indifference of the large majority.

No clique or cluster can muster anything like the strength which is necessary to ensure the success of most societies. This general pattern is more correctly revealed by the Rural Development Society. The Cultivation Committee is unique in its authority with the Co-operative Society midway between.

Struggles between rival groups over the election of office-bearers are infrequent. Confrontations are avoided. Prior estimates of strength are made and the weaker side ignores the proceedings. It will then probably decide to re-activate a dormant society or to start a new one. It is only in the larger societies that this exploration of strength is necessary. The opportunities of power afforded by the smaller ones are so limited that if one group controls a society or shows an interest in gaining control, a rival group loses little in moving to another society. The result is a plethora of societies; there are 24 in the village.

The goal of new societies is to work out some platform which will attract wide support by filling some obvious and hitherto unsatisfied need. The other problem is to ensure that it gets the necessary funds, the ideal being to secure it from a steady government source. These goals are seldom achieved. Societies pass from group to group, each giving it up after an unsuccessful attempt at infusing vigour into it.

The Community Centre is a case in point. It runs

a library and aims at providing recreational facilities for the younger sector. The problem is that the government grant which it receives is quite insufficient to run a wide range of activities. Because of this it is not widely supported. Attempts to raise money in the village have proved unsuccessful as this is not the type of venture which is high on the village list of priorities. Yet the Centre has the advantage of being recognised by the government and there is always the possibility of obtaining a higher grant. During the course of five years three different cliques attempted to get it going. One of them tried to turn it into a youth front with political as well as recreational activities. This too proved a failure.

A society which was begun recently and which has had considerable success is the Devale Restoration Society. Its main function at present is to organise a gam-madua[16] each year. As seen in an earlier chapter the performance of this ritual had ceased to be the annual event that it once was. Its purpose is to propitiate the gods and to ensure the general well-being of the village; as such there is support for the efforts of the society. This is, besides, a time of excitement and enjoyment in the village and is much looked forward to by all sectors.

The landowners have kept aloof. They feel that the ritual is being revived to further the political ends of the clique which organised the society. They a lso feel that

their position has been usurped; the privilege of organising the gam-madua which was once theirs has now been taken from them. So far their opposition has not been active but if the political intentions of the clique became too blatant, if the ritual was manifestly a clique affair, the landowner reaction may well become widespread and the society will lose the support that it now has.

The separatist approach of the Vahumpura in relation to village societies has already been seen. They are not concerned with mobilising support for the control of societies which are open to the whole village; indeed there is little hope of their being able to do so. The Vahumpura goal is to run their own societies for their own benefit. Within the caste the prolifera- of societies is held in check both by the lack of numbers and by their disinclination to reveal their differences to the Goigama.

The Co-operative Society and the Cultivation Committee present difficulties from the standpoint of a separatist approach. Administratively there is no objection to the Vahumpura having their own co-operative society. But their numbers in the village give them little hope that this will be economically feasible. Some of the Vahumpura who live on the boundaries of the village have solved the problem for themselves by becoming

regular customers in the Co-operative Store of the adjoining village.

With the Cultivation Committee the situation is different. The decision as to which unit will have a Committee is taken by the administration. When the election of office-bearers was held in 1967, the only Vahumpura to be elected to the Committee was the land-owner.[17] The Vahumpura were convinced, despite Goigama protestations that this was not just the luck of the draw. They regarded it as an attempt by the controlling clique to reduce their inadequate representation still further.[18] A petition was then sent to the authorities. The request was not for a Vahumpura Cultivation Committee - such a request would have been meaningless because the relevant unit in this context is not a group of people, but an area of paddy land. They asked that one part of the village fields, which is clearly demarcated from the other, be placed under the control of a new Cultivation Committee.

The Vahumpura lands are almost entirely situated in this area and they could expect to have a controlling voice. The clique which controls the present Committee has little or no support in this part. Some of the landowners who have land in this area themselves, and who are opposed to the clique, gave the Vahumpura covert support. They would have had no misgivings about this stand; ultimately it is they who would have been in

effective control of the new Committee because of the economic ties which bind many of the Vahumpura to them. However, the application was disallowed on the grounds, it was said, that the total area was too small for sub-division. The dispute is by no means over.

The Vahumpura know that there is some Goigama support for their demand, even if this cannot be openly expressed. They will press for a new Committee by exposing the shortcomings of the present one, as indeed they have already begun to do. If the authorities grant their request they will be able to limit their contacts with the Goigama to those with the landowners and to regard themselves as a separate community for most purposes. The landowners are the only people among the Goigama in relation to whom they are willing to accept a subordinate position.

VI The Village Committee

Let me discuss now the more formal aspects of village politics. When the Village Committee was first instituted[19] the office of Village Committee Member was not looked upon as one of any importance. The power lay with the administration and the scope of local politics was regarded as limited. Remuna, along with two adjacent villages was grouped into one electoral division. The seat was first held by one village, then by another, and

on one occasion the candidate was returned unopposed. The Remuna landowners took little interest in the Village Committee; they felt that its affairs were beneath their notice and the village agreed with them. There appears to have been little effort even to ensure that the seat was always held by Remuna. By the late fifties this situation began to change. Membership of the Village Committee became a desirable political office. It came to be viewed as one which could be used to influence the conduct of village affairs. By 1967, local elections had gained so much in importance that they exceeded parliamentary elections in the excitement and rivalry that they aroused. What are the outlines of this change?

Local politicians had a big hand in the victory of the rural-based Sri Lanka Freedom Party in the General Election of 1956. Village Committee Chairmen were particularly prominent and some of them were accepted as candidates for parliamentary seats. This had several effects. Local politicians now had direct access to the centres of power and were thus able to extract some recognition from the district administration. Local politics established itself as an avenue to national politics. The demand, until then very tentative, that candidates at parliamentary elections should be residents of the areas which they seek to represent, further strengthened the position of the local politicians.

Inevitably the resources available to the Village Committee increased appreciably and, with it, the scope for political patronage. The general policy was to use these bodies as instruments through which rural amenities were improved. These changes did not have a uniform importance in all areas, but those in which local politics did not receive some lift were very few indeed.

In Remuna, the Village Committee election of 1963 was the first to be held after these forces began to operate. By then it had become an electoral division on its own, a new scheme of delimitation having separated it from the two villages with which it was previously associated. P. Mendis, who had represented the combined division, announced that he would be contesting the Remuna seat even though he was from one of the other two villages. One of the cliques - the one which had taken control of the Rural Development Society by this time - decided that the time had come to get the Committee to do something for the village and set about looking for a candidate. Mendis, it was generally agreed, had made little attempt to increase Remuna's share of the available resources.

The nominee finally decided upon was M. Jayasundere, the son of a landowner who had then just died. There were two other candidates in the field - Y. Somadasa and H. Robert. Somadasa's income came mainly from

his own lands but he also worked as an anda-goviya. He was in addition the village specialist in the felling of trees. Robert was a Vahumpura man of mixed occupation. The election aroused greater interest than the previous ones; Jayasundere beat Mendis comfortably, the other two polling only a small percentage of the vote.

The first aspect of interest about this election is the choice of Jayasundere as a candidate. To take advantage of the mood of the village the clique had to put forward a candidate who would be well received on all sides. His socialist beliefs had to be pronounced, yet he had to be acceptable to the landowners. He had to be a man of high status for else, the clique argued, he would not command the respect of the other members of the Committee. This high status might also mean that he would be free from the burden of having to earn his own living, in which case he would be able to devote all his time to village affairs. The clique was anxious to get away from Remuna's previous record in which ability and status had not counted sufficiently in the choice of candidates. It wanted to establish the standard that they should be chosen from among the intelligentsia. However, the consideration which was more important than all these was that the candidate should be the creature of the clique.

Jayasundere met these requirements extremely

well. He belonged to an unpopular family whose following was much less than that of the other landowners. His political position was therefore entirely due to the sponsorship of the clique. The propaganda on his behalf was to the effect that, despite his ancestry, he was a socialist of keen convictions. It was suggested that this membership of the clique, though recent, was proof of this. Those who opposed him asked for more evidence but none could be given - either about this or about his aptitude for village politics. The landowners felt that if one among them was to be chosen then a better choice could be made. Jayasundere's boyhood had been a stormy one and the virtues which the village associates with good breeding were not abundant in him. However, nobody else from the landowner families was willing to come forward and they decided to support him. The other major Goigama clique - later to become more powerful and to control both the Cultivation Committee and the Co-operative Society - was at this stage playing a subordinate role. It supported the choice of the senior clique very enthusiastically.

Somadasa came forward on the old assumption that election to the Village Committee was of no interest to those of higher status. His support came principally from his own neighbourhood.[20] When Jayasundere's candidature was announced Somadasa did not regard this as a serious challenge because of the unpopularity of the

former's family. It was not until it was too late to withdraw without considerable loss of face that he realised the extent of the left support for Jayasundere. Up to this time he had regarded Mendis as his main rival and had expected the village desire to elect its own man to see him through.

The other feature of the election is that it led to a rift between the Vahumpura and the Goigama left. Mendis's lands in the adjoining village are very near the boundary between the two villages. On the Remuna side this is a Vahumpura neighbourhood. Mendis himself is neither Vahumpura nor Goigama; he has economic contacts with the Vahumpura; they look on him as a patron and up to this time he had enjoyed their political support. Jayasundere's entry made little difference to this situation. The Vahumpura had received few economic benefits from his father and felt in no way bound to give him their support. A few decided to vote for him, merely because he was a left candidate.

Robert was the last to enter the lists. The Vahumpura did not like this; they saw it as an attempt to raise the caste issue in a context in which it could have no possible advantage. Even so, many felt compelled to support Robert so that at this stage the Vahumpura vote was divided between Mendis and Robert with Jayasundere taking a small percentage. A few days before polling there was a rumour that Robert had been put forward by

those who were managing Jayasundere's campaign so as to break Mendis's Vahumpura vote. When these suspicions got abroad Jayasundere lost whatever Vahumpura support that he had had. The feelings of animosity which were generated have continued ever since. They received renewed expression in the controversy over the Cultivation Committee. (See Section V above)

During his term of office Jayasundere was able to make the Village Committee concern itself with Remuna in a way that it had not done before. It was claimed for him that this was the result of his being a leftist and, therefore, of being a supporter of the Committee's left-wing Chairman. Within the village, despite this record, the majority verdict was that he was hasty and arrogant. One incident in particular was crucial. As a result of an argument over a petition he assaulted a near kinsman of a respected landowner. When the 1966 election came round one of the latter's sons, P. Premadasa, was put forward to contest Jayasundere by way of reprisal. The clique which had sponsored him in the previous election (which I shall call Clique A) had by then been embarrassed by his behaviour. Its own position had also declined and while it continued to support Jayasundere, this was markedly less than on the former occasion. Jayasundere was now championed by the other clique (B) which, in doing so, challenged the position of Clique A.

This was the first occasion on which there was a straight contest between two candidates from Remuna, and there was considerable polarisation between right and left. The check on this was the landowner's popularity. Due to this Premadasa was assured of support from quarters which would otherwise have voted left. The Vahumpura were solidly behind him.

On the eve of polling day all local elections were postponed due to a state of emergency in the country and Jayasundere averted what was generally regarded as certain defeat. During the year that followed he married a Berawa girl from another village whose family had been temporarily resident in Remuna. This was followed by much dissension in his own family. There were also rumblings to the effect that this action had made him unacceptable to the left as a candidate. He made little attempt to test the truth of this and announced the withdrawal of his candidature from the postponed election which was held an year later. Premadasa did the same - his sole purpose in presenting himself as a candidate had been to defeat Jayasundere.

Two new candidates then faced each other. Clique B, now more confident of the support that it had, nominated T.D. Emonis. He was one of the leaders of the clique and was a mason by profession. He was also a prominent cultivator who was accepted as the

leader of a large work team. His opponent was L. Wijeratne, son of the wealthiest landowner, who proclaimed himself an independent socialist.[21] Clique A attempted to get Emonis to withdraw on the grounds that two left candidates need not oppose each other. They were also doubtful about Emonis's fitness for the job. Wijeratne they felt was better able to perform the duties of a Village Committee Member.

This was strongly repudiated by Clique B. They pointed out that Wijeratne's father had done little to endear himself to the village. Wijeratne was completely dependent on his father for his income and would not be able to pursue his own line of action even if he had a mind to do so. They regarded him as a right-wing candidate. They also suggested that it would be foolish to elect such a candidate as the former left-wing Chairman of the Village Committee was almost certain to secure re-election as Chairman. The reply from Wijeratne's partisans was that if he was elected there was every chance that the Remuna member might himself be the Chairman. It was even hinted that Wijeratne's ambitions went even beyond this, i.e. to a seat in parliament.

In the end Wijeratne won a hard-fought election by a narrow margin. It was an election in which internal alignments were clearly manifested; cliques and clusters were very much to the fore, and an uncommitted stance was extremely difficult. Wijeratne had the support of the landowners, of the Vahumpura and of many of

the smaller clusters. Emonis was supported by the two main Goigama cliques. There were allegations of bribery and undue influence against Wijeratne. He was also accused of making promises about securing employment for his supporters which he could never hope to keep. Whatever may have been the truth of these allegations, it was clear that the economic power of Wijeratne's father was a decisive factor in the outcome of the election.

My purpose in describing the main aspects of these elections has been to point to certain features which have emerged during this period. Village Committee elections have now reached a stage when they both express and stimulate power struggles within the village. The conflicts between the Goigama left and the landowners as well as those between the former and the Vahumpura are more clearly evident at this, than at any other, time. The importance of the Village Committee Member is no longer questioned. He belongs to a body which controls resources which are ever on the increase. This gives added power to, and leads to an increase in the status of, even the most highly placed in the village. A further source of power is the external contacts with national politicians and the administration, which the office makes possible. This change of approach to the Village Committee has led to a greater involvement in the region.

If the Member is to be effective he must develop links with other members, be a supporter of the Chairman's party or, best of all, secure election as Chairman himself. To do this he must have a standing which is recognised well beyond his own village.

VII The Village and National Politics

People who belong to left-oriented cliques do not always vote left at parliamentary elections, nor do the members of clusters always vote right. Why is this so? Why is it that these alignments do not spill over into the national level? The crucial factor is the extent to which patronage at the local level, as dispensed by cliques and clusters, is part of a pyramid reaching up to the regional and national level. In Remuna this is limited.

Consider the relation between a clique and the left-wing Member of Parliament (or a regional politician who is an important figure in the party organisation in the district). The clique can offer the M.P. the support of its members but this is only a small percentage of the total left vote in the village. The M.P.'s help is needed by the clique to influence government organisations which are connected with the societies which it controls. Individual members of the clique would like him to assist them in securing employment and in

dealing with the administration over land and other problems.

What the M.P. can do tends to be limited when he is not a member of the governing party. This was the case during my time in the village. Whatever he has to distribute - and time is the most scarce commodity - has to be divided between several cliques even in one village. Therefore, even if cliques start off with a strong connection with the M.P. this tends to get attenuated over time. They realise that not much can be got out of this connection as far as their immediate problems are concerned.

The problems of the landowners are no different. They support the prospective right-wing candidate but have little to offer him. They are unable to contribute to campaign funds in a way that will be regarded as substantial by regional standards. As their capacity for patronage is dwindling their clients can no longer expect to be looked after by them in all their difficulties. This makes the clients concerned about measures which are taken at a national level and leads them to take an independent stance on such matters. Thus the landowners cannot even guarantee that their clients will vote the same way as they do. What they can claim from the right-wing candidate - he has less to distribute than the M.P. - is limited and adds little to their own power. Therefore

the clients have little to gain by voting right and the landowners are not particularly concerned if they do not.

The general situation then is one in which there are not many brokering opportunities for the leaders of cliques and clusters. The absence in Remuna of active branches of the different political parties is also related to this. Groups with different interests but which vote the same way in parliamentary elections will sink their differences only under certain conditions. There must be some resource or advantage which becomes available to them as a result of uniting in a party branch. At present this does not happen except at election time and it is then that the party branches emerge from their hibernation. It is clear then that patronage is not an important determinant of how an individual votes in national politics.

Remuna's increasing involvement in a wider economy makes it react to decisions which are taken at a national level. There are people in the village - monks, teachers, government employees and members of the minority castes - who see themselves as belonging to country-wide, self-aware groups whose interests are improved by one party and damaged by another. Local politics is not seen as an instrument through which these interests can be advanced. It relates to issues which are more specific and immediate. Allegiances at

a local level are not therefore necessarily transferred to a national level.

L. Jompi and W. Guneris illustrate this clearly. Jompi votes left in national politics. He is a Vahumpura and believes that only the left will take measures to improve their position. But as a member of a cluster he voted for Wijeratne at the 1967 Village Committee elections. Guneris votes right in national politics and one of his many arguments for doing so is that this type of government makes for law and order. However, at the Village Committee election he voted for Emonis. He is a peripheral member of the clique of which Emonis is a leader and derives the benefit of reciprocity in agricultural work through this membership.

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In the three preceding chapters I examined different resources which are available to individuals in the village. In this chapter I have taken this a stage further. I have examined public resources with the same basic concerns in mind. We have seen the groups which are the devices through which such resources are controlled. We have also seen the types of individuals who are prominent in the groups, the particular strengths of each type of group and also the way that they

relate to other groups in the society. The choices made by individuals between different sorts of groups have also been noted. Though superficially different from what has been considered in the previous chapters, these resources are essentially similar in that they offer another avenue for the individual to increase his following and, therefore, his status.

This chapter completes the examination of resources. I shall now attempt to collate and interpret the 'rules' which govern the distribution and use of all resources.

Footnotes to Chapter Five

1 See Page 21.

2 See Page 25.

3 See Page 26.

4 Its failure to make a success of dealing in rubber will be recalled. See Page 139.

5 See Page 70.

6 See Page 114.

7 At the village level this is a bid for equality. Apart from this, the Vahumpura would like to avoid identification as Vahumpura when they go elsewhere.

8 It will be remembered that the area in which this is not so is the former forest reserve.

9 As for instance when there is a theft and an outsider is suspected.

10 As there are, and have been, a fair proportion of intra-village marriages, such a neighbourhood is not necessarily confined to a patronymic group.

11 See page 93.

12 See page 40.

13 See page 42.

14 See page 206 above.

15 The Paddy Lands Act makes provision for this.

16 See page 119.

17 See page 214 above.

18 Some of the Vahumpura who do not desire a complete break with the Goigama did not wish to go beyond pressing for an inquiry.

19 See page 21

20 There was an incipient clique in this neighbourhood but it disintegrated with Somadasa's defeat.

21 As opposed to Emonis who had connections with a Marxist Party.

22 For several years, except for one short break, the constituency in which Remuna is situated has been represented by a Member of Parliament from one of the left parties. These parties, for most of the time, have been in opposition. During my time in the village, its contacts with the governing party were made through the right-wing candidate. This amounted to little as his influence in the party was generally regarded as limited.

Chapter Six

STATUS AND POWER

I Introduction

The fundamental argument of this chapter is that thathwaya (status) as used in Remuna is a way of controlling the distribution of resources. I hope to demonstrate how this has come about. I shall also try to show the connection between status, power and leadership and how they differ from each other.

My attempt in the previous chapters has been to lead up to this argument. In discussing the different aspects and institutions of Remuna society it has not been my purpose either to describe them in all their fulness or to demonstrate their functions in the system, viewed as a static isolate. I have taken resources to be, directly or indirectly, a source of income and having done so I have examined the four types of resources which are available to the village. There is land. There are the ritual, caste and other

services which it needs, including the supply of consumer goods. Then there are external opportunities - trade, employment and the production of goods. The resources made available by the government complete the picture.

Who controls these resources? To whom are their benefits available? How are they distributed among the community? What rules and values govern their distribution? These are the questions that I have had before me. In this chapter I want to draw together the inferences made in the previous ones, to see how resources considered as a totality are handled, and then to attempt an explanation as to why the society chooses this particular method.

There are a few preliminary observations that can be made about the general drift of resources. From the viewpoint of individual income, land continues to be the most important single element. But in terms of money flowing into the village the income earned from the produce of the land has now been caught up by the income which external employment provides. In comparison with these two items the other avenues through which the village earns its external income are of minor significance. Geographically considered this income is derived almost solely from the sale of goods and services to urban sources. What the village earns through sale to neighbouring villages and to the

region is of marginal importance. Most of this external income is eaten up by the increasing demand for consumer goods so that Remuna's 'balance of payments' is not a favourable one.

Some resources have expanded and others have contracted during recent years. In money terms, resources considered as a whole have expanded. There is increased productivity in rubber and paddy, government assistance is greater, as also is external employment. The proportions, however, have changed; the share of land in the total has decreased. Other changes include a reduction in the demand for certain ritual services - bali-thovils, in particular, are performed very rarely.[1] The temple does not get the unquestioning support that it once did. This is, in part, responsible for a change in the proportion between its own income and village contributions. In expanding resources the push has been in the direction of employment and government assistance. This would have been more successful if not for the discontinuity which has existed between local politics and national politics, if, that is, the pyramid of patronage had been a much larger one.

II The Evaluation of Resources

Letme now consider some of the important factors relating to the evaluation and distribution of

resources. As we have seen some occupations and activities are approved and desired while others are not. What are the underlying principles which can be inferred from the previous discussions?

Income is important; so is the possibility of building up a following. This can be done in one or more of several ways. Landowners do so by providing work for others. They as well as others who have high incomes can help their clients with credit. Ritual practitioners and craftsmen build up their support through the services that they provide. Those in authority, such as the officials of village societies, have favours to dispense. People in all these categories may have external contacts which can be used for the benefit of their clients. The basis of the chief monk's following is less obvious. The temple has land and he has his external contacts, but these are less important than the fact that he is the repository of the Buddhist set of values. His wider support comes from all those who regard themselves as practising Buddhists and this is almost the whole community. However, his effective support is derived from those who give the same slant to Buddhism that he does.

Increasing one's following and increasing one's income are very often alternatives. We have seen this to be particularly so with the shopkeepers. It is also the problem faced by the ritual practitioners and

the craftsmen. The landowners are in a somewhat different position. In providing work they also increase their income; the choice that they have to make is at the level of savings. If they want a large clientele with all its attendant obligations, they must be prepared to save less.

Occupations are also evaluated from the viewpoint of service to the community. The monks, the teachers, the kapuralas (even though there are no resident ones in the village) and the ayurvedic physicians all rank high in this respect. At the other end are the sellers of illict liquor; not even their most faithful customers will defend them by saying that they provide a much needed service. The shopkeepers are looked upon as people who enrich themselves at the expense of the community and something of this attitude extends to the entrepreneurs. The kattadiyas are also very much in this category. Despite the protestations of most of them that they do not perform the malefic rituals, the predominant feeling is that they are people of whom others must beware. Craftsmen and those who perform caste services are neutral from this point of view. If they do not give of their services to the community in a reasonable way then they are regarded as doing it a disservice. The landowners and the village politicans have the potential to be of service; the verdict on them depends very much on whom they are being judged by.

Closely related to all this is the problem of good values. Those who follow certain occupations cannot, ipso facto, exhibit the right morality. The seller of illicit liquor is the most glaring example.

A fourth characteristic is recruitment to the occupation. Is it, like shopkeeping, open to anyone? Is it especially popular with the lower income groups as are some of the crafts? Is it the appointed service of a lower caste? Does it rank high because entry is possible only through training, skill or education? Teachers, monks and ayurvedic physicians are at an advantage here.

There are two other features which need mention. Does an occupation or activity provide opportunities for making useful external contacts? This is the external counterpart of having a following within the village. Here monks, teachers, government workers and village politicians get a high rating. The other consideration is whether the occupation involves the sale of services in the village. Do the people who follow this pay out money or receive it? Those who work for others, either on their lands or in their enterprises are of course in the latter, lower ranking, category. The ayurvedic physicians and the kapuralas also get paid for their services but this does not apply to them because they do not become clients through this. The approach towards them is also conditioned by the complex of attributes which is normally associated with their occupations. The

craftsmen and the Kattadiyas are somewhat similar but they do not have quite this position.

There are then four important characteristics which are looked for in the evaluation of occupations - income, following, service to the community and recruitment. In using these characteristics, two things are being done. There is an acceptance of the reality of power - the importance of high income and of a large following are recognised. Equally there is an attempt to control the manner in which power is acquired - an attempt to ensure that this is done through avenues which are of benefit to the community and which cause no social dislocation.

How is power distributed within the community? The landowners are the most powerful people; they have the largest following and the biggest incomes. These incomes are obtained from the best source of all - land. The chief monk's position is even superior to this, except that he is considered to be outside the system. He does not participate fully in the economic and political contexts in which power is exercised so that for the most part it is potential and is never really tested in confrontation.[2] At the second level, below the landowners, are two sets of people - the entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, craftsmen and the kattadiyas who earn their living in the village; and the teachers, government

employees and others whose income comes from outside. For the present purpose the rest of the village can be thought of as one large single category at the base. This is the broad hierarchy of power.

The more powerful in Remuna, therefore, derive their income from three main sources - land, external employment and services. This in itself is in no way peculiar to Remuna. But the relative power yielded by each type of resource varies from village to village That is, the power of the landowners relative to the two sets below them, and of these sets relative to each other, is a special feature of Remuna. If it were not for this particular balance of power village politics would have a very different aspect.

The wealth of Remuna landowners is not on such a scale that they can remain secure in the face of competition. Incomes among some of those who have external employment are high enough for them to reach landowner levels of wealth in time. The power gap between the two groups is, even at the moment, not all that wide.

The other set - those who earn their living in the village - is somewhat behind but their position has improved. The increases in income which have been obtained by those with external employment has had the effect of raising the general level of consumption in the village. Others are forced to keep up with them. This general trend has been fortunate from the point of view

of those who provide services. These are now needed by people who cannot really afford to pay for them, giving this set - the craftsmen, kattadiyas, and shopkeepers as well- a power which, in the recent past, they did not have.

The most obvious way in which an individual in either of the two sets can change his position is by becoming a landowner. Seven of the present landowners inherited their lands. One among these has improved his inheritance through careful savings from the salary which he received when he was a teacher. Two of them are in a weaker position than when they began - one through imprudent management and other through excessive patronage. The other four are more or less where they started. Only two landowners have actually achieved this position,[3] but they too have been established as such for several years. What are the possibilities then of new recruits joining this group?

The kattadiyas and the craftsmen have incomes which are not high enough to enable them to make substantial savings. Some of the shopkeepers and the entrepreneurs may approach this but only if they break out of the orbit of village commerce. Thus the new landowners are not likely to emerge from among those who are confined to the village in their activities.[4]

The position is different with those who have external incomes. The older teachers in particular have

had this type of employment for many years and have had the opportunity of accumulating considerable savings.[5] Besides, as education was more difficult to obtain when they were young they would have come from families which had a certain minimum of wealth. They are therefore well on the road to becoming landowners. This is not the situation of all those who have good external incomes. The teachers can, in this respect be contrasted with the transport workers whose high incomes are recent and who started with little or no wealth. Their chances are much more remote. Still, external employment is firmly established as the road which one must follow if the position of landowner is the goal.

The difficulty is the one of obtaining such employment, as against the earlier difficulty of obtaining an education which fitted one for it. This has become so marked now that many are beginning to be sceptical about the value of expenditure on education - in marked contrast to the attitude prevailing ten years ago. The result of this inability to secure external employment is that power remains where it was. The numbers of those who are externally employed have not increased in the way that the village anticipated.

It is in these circumstances that the village societies have emerged as weapons with which to challenge established positions in the village. The conflict between Clique A and Clique B which I referred to in the

last chapter is particularly relevant here. The leaders of Clique A were really aspirant landowners. Initially both cliques had an interest in wresting leadership from the established landowners. Later, however, Clique B realised that it had other interests which were not shared by Clique A and adopted a more radical approach. The candidature of Emonis in the Village Committee elections of 1967 was an expression of this. Clique B is, of course, a Goigama one. The problems faced by the Vahumpura are worse still; their cliques cannot gain control of those important societies which are open to the whole village, nor can they get external employment.

These are the broad outlines of power. How does the community attempt to channel its resources? Where does it want the power to reside? Again let me recall some of the norms and values which have already emerged.

We have seen in Chapter II the values which apply to land - what I described as a 'commoner' Goigama ideology. The majority do not own niravul lands - they have only shares in blocks. The purpose of this set of values is to ensure that nobody finds himself without a place to live in as a result either of partition actions or of the sales of shares by other coparceners. Therefore they also operate as sanctions against those who adopt a policy of land

grabbing.

What are some of the other values? External employment for the Vahumpura, particularly as teachers, is not welcomed by the Goigama. There is a similar reaction to the high incomes earned by transport workers. Entrepreneurial activity is appropriate for landowners but not for others. Certain occupations such as those of the monk, the kapurala and the ayurvedic physician should draw their recruits from the better families. There is more confidence in a kattadiya if he is backed by a family tradition. When by 1963, the office of Village Committee member became a desirable one, it was felt that it should be filled by men of standing.[6]

These and others like these are values which govern access to resources. There are other values about how a resource should be exploited. The right way for the Radaw and the Berawa to earn their living is through their caste occupations. On no account should they attempt to engage in cultivation. Monks should confine themselves to the benefits that they derive from their role in the village and should not seek to extend this by indulging in political and other secular activities. The kattadiya's attempt to function as a kapurala is frowned upon. Those who serve the community - with their caste services, as craftsmen and so on - must be seen to be people who want only an honest living. With some occupations such as the selling

of illicit liquor there is no possibility of an acceptable emphasis. They are wholly bad.

The basic implication of these norms and values is that they check the enlargement of individual power and restrict the possibility of individual mobility. High incomes are not approved for all - only for those who achieve it with effort and particularly for those who already have a moderate income. The expansion of an occupation by those who practise it so that they have wider economic and political scope is resented. At first sight, then, these are maintenance values designed to keep the situation as it is. There may appear to be a contradiction here. On the one hand the position of landowners is being challenged and no longer is this only by aspirant landowners. (Among the leaders of Clique B are two craftsmen and a kattadiya.) On the other hand values are heavily loaded in favour of keeping people where they are.

Let me pick up the argument which I used earlier in explaining the attitude to business activities.[7] What is the position in which the majority are placed? They do not provide services. The chances of advancing themselves in this way or by using their initiative in business is judged to be remote. Mobility of this type - very much a matter of fate - comes only to a few and its effect is to put the majority at a disadvantage. All that happens is that a few more people get nearer the

goal of becoming landowners.

The efforts of the majority are of another sort. Their support is not for a situation in which a few fortunate individuals manage to left themselves up but for one which provides for the mobility of all through education and employment. Meanwhile the present disparities should be held in check and nobody should be allowed to step out of line.

There are two reasons behind this attitude. The internal order has not broken down. Landowners still dispense patronage, there is reciprocal assistance and people are able to face the crises that they encounter through the sustenance that they receive from the community. The other reason is that the general situation is not one of opportunity. There is no plenitude of resources which is ripe for exploitation. In land, in external employment and in trade there is constriction. It is not therefore likely that an ideology of opportunity, an ethic of enterprise, will arise in such a context.

The landowners are happy with this aspect of the situation. Recruits to their ranks are few and aspirants have to contend with the hostility of the community. Their most faithful followers have an added reason for supporting the general approach. In this they feel that they are safeguarding the interests of the landowners.

If the village economy was tending to breakdown, if the collapse of the internal order was imminent and if sectors in the village had external political connections, there would then be every incentive to give the system a final push and to demolish it altogether. As it is, the desire is to maintain it while achieving a higher standard of living for the majority. Again the success of Clique B is interesting. One of the reasons why Clique A lost its support was because the community realised that its leaders were participating in village affairs only until such time as they were in a position to become landowners themselves. With such aspirations the majority had little in common. The leaders of Clique B are economically much nearer the majority. Their programme of work is in considerable accord with what it accepts.

The approach that I have spoken of above is a Goigama view. Those among them who are able to achieve some mobility react against this even though they may adopt the same approach towards others who are similarly placed. The percentage among the Goigama who are so affected is small but with the other castes the position is different. Every move of theirs is examined even though the sanctions that the Goigama can apply have decreased over the years. Is it a step to emancipate themselves and so change the order to the disadvantage of the Goigama?

This is strongly resented by the other castes. The effect on the Vahumpura has been that the achievement of any one individual is treated as a triumph for the whole caste. Upward mobility is not conceived of in terms of holding some down until the caste can go up as a whole. Individual mobility and the general progress of the caste are two prongs in the same attack.

III Status

Let me now go back to where I started from - the evaluation of occupations. This is not done for its own sake; its importance lies in the attributes which it gives to those who practise it. The degree to which a particular individual appropriates such attributes varies. All landowners do not have the same level of income or the same size of following. An ayurvedic physician may fail to exploit the economic potential of his profession. A kattadiya may succeed in convincing the community that he does not practice harmful rituals and increase his following thereby. An occupation does not, therefore, fix an individual's attributes - it provides a range. The ultimate ranking is not of occupations but of individuals.

The attributes derived from an occupation are not, of course, the only ones which an individual

possesses. Landowners for instance differ from each other in the quality of their genealogies, the type of external contacts that they have, their reputation for good values and so on. It is all these attributes taken together which given an individual his status and his ranking vis-a-vis the other members of the community. However, as I shall demonstrate presently, status is not only a mere summation. It has also a normative function. It is the concept through which all that has been discussed in the last section is brought down to the level of day to day interaction. As such it is an integral part of the apparatus with which the community handles its resources. But first how is status computed and how does it actually work? A brief description is necessary before it is possible to examine its function in more detail. It will be recalled that thathwaya (status) is one of the most important concepts used by the community.[8]

The basic fact is that people are viewed by each other as having a certain status, the whole community being ranked in these terms. People do not have difficulty in assigning others their due status even though all are not equally explicit about how they set about their ranking. Answers to questions on this topic, together with the observation of the actual process of ranking give sufficient indication of what happens.

Every individual has a set of attributes. Each

of these attributes is ranked against its own special scale. Suppose that a man's assets consist of five acres of high land, three acres of paddy land a large house. This is his wealth and when this quantum is evaluated against the wealth scale it ranks as high. So he has a ranked attribute - high wealth. (Scales are either high-low or good-bad.)

This is done over a whole range of attributes. Some of these require little comment - income, wealth, occupation, education, following, caste, external contacts, geneaology and political office. Other aspects include the level of consumption. Does the subject spend as much on himself and his family as he can reasonably be expected to, or is he miserly in his outlook? What does he do for others in the way of gifts and loans? Has he made a good marriage in the right and acceptable fashion? Does he sell his labour? What are his values; does he follow the five precepts of Buddhism? Is he helpful and compassionate towards others? Does he abstain from strong drink? Is he in any way associated with the slaughter of animals, particularly cattle? The subject then ends up with a series of ranked attributes and it is the summation of these which gives him his status.

Ranking is thus a two-stage process. Attributes are ranked first and then individuals are ranked against each other on the basis of the sum of their ranked attributes. At times families are spoken of as having

a status which means that this process is applied to the family as a whole. Some ranked attributes are referred to as high-status attributes; the indication is that they are usually associated with people of high status. Thus high income is a high status attribute. Similarly there are high-status and low-status actions.

One feature of the system is that individuals with the same dominant attribute, such as being in the same occupational category, need not necessarily have the same status. M. Nandadeva and S.K. Melis are two landowners whose wealth and income are more or less equal. Nandadeva holds office in village societies and he has a larger following than Melis. While he is more helpful to people, his values in other respects are not quite as good as those of Melis. Nandadeva has a much higher level of education than Melis but caste is a strong reducing factor as he is a Vahumpura. His positive attributes are not strong enough to counteract this and Melis has a higher overall rating.

How does Melis compare with P. Arong, another landowner? The latter's sexual morals are somewhat in question but he is very generous and has a very large following. He is much involved in village affairs and has held several offices even though he is not active in this way any more. He has more wealth and a higher income than Melis but there is little to choose between their genealogies. Arong's status is decidedly superior.

In relation to L. Emis, however, Arong's position is different. In wealth and income Emis ranks higher but, as he is a first generation landowner, Arong's genealogy is much better. Arong has, besides, a larger following. These attributes even out leaving the two, Emis and Arong, at much the same status.

A similar situation exists in other occupations too even though differences in genealogy are generally less marked. K.G. Silva and A.D. Arnolis are two carpenters. Silva works mainly for a landowner and his family circle which makes him, for most purposes, a client. Arnolis works chiefly for people who live in his own neighbourhood and in the three or four neighbourhoods surrounding it. He has a higher income than Silva, belongs to a clique, and has a small following of his own. Arnolis's genealogy is a reasonably good one but it is not markedly superior to that of most other carpenters. Even if Silva had an average genealogy Arnolis would still have had the higher status because of his other attributes.[9] But Silva is an outsider who settled in the village about ten years ago. Outsiders are taken to have poor genealogies, for, it is argued, if they do belong to good families why leave their own villages and come to Remuna. This puts the relative positions of Arnolis and Silva beyond doubt.

Another feature is that people who have the same statuses may well achieve them through very different

attributes. It is not possible to acquire high status without wealth and income but even here, as we have just seen there is variation in the accompanying attributes. This is much more so lower down on the scale. At the same level of status there are people who have a good education but little else; people whose occupation is reasonable, who have an average genealogy and who are involved (though not as key office-bearers) in village societies; people who rank high in many respects but whose caste pulls them down, and people even who have a high income but who have obtained this in a manner of which the society strongly disapproves.

This description might tend to suggest that there is complete unanimity and precision in the evaluation of status. This is not so. A's attributes may well be ranked differently by B and by C. In general there is agreement on the measurable attributes - wealth and income - but this agreement is less apparent in ranking, say, values. Even more important is the weightage given to each item in the final computation. All do not attach the same significance to wealth. A good genealogy is similarly treated differently as indeed are all the other important items. Further B will not necessarily give the same weightage to wealth when evaluating C as he does when evaluating A. What are the implications of this flexibility?

A system of ranking usually does two things: it is an indication of who controls, has access to, or enjoys the scarce commodities of the society - material or otherwise. It is also a statement as to who should do so. Underlying the fact there is the rule. In systems of ranking of the present type two extremes are possible. At one end is the situation in which no two individuals arrive at anything like the same rankings. The system is probably in a state of breakdown, there are very few agreed values and status will have ceased to regulate social relations. At the other end there is complete unanimity. The people who control resources are those who, in the view of the society, should control them - status has ossified into authority. This is not likely to be a situation in which there is change in any aspect of resources.

Most actual situations are in between and therefore some variation in ranking must be expected. If the context is one in which status orders social relations significantly, without however reaching a point of rigidity, what can be expected? There will be general agreement about the evaluation of attributes. That is, both X and Y will be in broad agreement when they evaluate A's wealth and the quality of his genealogy. They would differ in the weightage that they give to these attributes in the summation. This would lead to rankings which are different but which are nevertheless not

widely divergent. What needs to be decided, then, is the degree of agreement in Remuna.

While on occasion the variations between two rankings may be striking they tend to lose their significance against the regularities of a larger number. The agreement between people who are not immediately connected with the subjects is quite high. There is a strong feeling that status is something that is objective; a person possesses it whether the evaluator is hostile to him or not. (This contrasts with the attitude towards leadership which I discuss later on in the chapter.) The 'objective' existence of status is further emphasised in comments on some high-status men who are of little assistance to others. 'He has status', it is said, 'but of what use is it to us?' Even though they are disliked their status is admitted.

Thus, I would argue that the level of agreement in ranking is high in Remuna and that the degree of variation that is observed is of the order that should be expected in a situation of changing resources. It is not of a magnitude which would suggest that status has lost its meaning in the society. On the contrary it is proof that the normative component of status is responding to the changes in the bases of power.

The finest distinctions, though not necessarily the most objective ones, are drawn between the other

residents of one's neighbourhood. As the circle becomes wider these become less sharp - personal awareness of attributes is an important aspect of evaluation. As a result of this, people who have some standing in the world outside are sometimes dissatisfied with the recognition accorded to them by the village. Their sphere of activity may be such that their attributes are much less apparent to the village than those of, say, the landowners. Such people exercise their authority elsewhere; it is there that they may have a following and even the volume of their expenditure may be fully appreciated only in that context.

In everyday behaviour differences of status are expressed in many ways. People of decidedly higher status are addressed as mahathmaya (a rough equivalent would be 'sir'). When the inequality is even more marked the person of lower status will not sit on a chair in the presence of the other but only on a bench or stool. One has a meal at the house of a person of higher status and also accepts gifts such as garden produce from him. If such hospitality and gifts are accepted from an equal this is on the understanding of reciprocity. These are not generally accepted from those of lower status; if the circumstances are such that this cannot be avoided then a bigger return is usually made.

When the difference of status is a narrow one or when there is some ambiguity (as when caste is involved),

there is a strong tendency to avoidance. This is particularly so in the upper reaches of the scale. A strong vein of rivalry runs through the people of high status even though this may be held in check through the need to co-operate over vital interests. There is little in the way of bonds of solidarity between people merely because they happen to be of the same status.

However, there are broad patterns of behaviour which are the accepted norms for particular statuses. For example, a person of high status is expected to be generous in all his dealings and to refrain from litigation which will have damaging consequences for others. If he does not do so his values are brought into question, his following decreases, and there is a loss of status.

Upward mobility is the improving of the quality of one's attributes. Let me, therefore, survey them briefly examining how they hang together, how the improvement of one is dependent on others. In the present context caste has to be taken as a given; little that any one person can do can change the position of his caste in the village. An individual's efforts can do something for his genealogy, for genealogy is not merely a view of the past, but such a view in terms

of, and influenced by, the present. Still, this is possible only in the case of exceptional individuals who reach the highest levels of status. For most purposes this too has to be taken as a given. Values are also an independent attribute; while it influences other attributes, it is not itself influenced by any one of them.

If wealth is inherited, then this goes together with a good genealogy. If acquired, it is probably the result of a good occupation and to obtain this a good education would have been necessary. Wealth and income do, of course, react on each other. It is only those who rank high in income who can both afford a high level of consumption as well as help others financially.

Wealth and income are also important in making a desirable alliance in marriage, in the help that one is able to give others, in the size of one's following and in forming useful external contacts. However, wealth and income are not the only factors in acquiring these other attributes. Others may either supplement or act as alternatives. The possibility of a good marriage is greatly strengthened through good genealogy and to a lesser extent through good values. Those in special occupations are also in a position to help others, and such people have a following even though their wealth and income is not high. As it is the size

of a following which determines the chances of political office, this may be open to them too. External contacts too can be established just as easily through political office and occupation as through wealth and income.

What this demonstrates is that there are two main directions in which a person can improve those attributes which he is in a position to change. One is through income and the other is through getting other people in debt to him by performing some service for them. These are the two pillars on which most of the other attributes rest. Those who are keen to improve their status and can see no possibility of an effective increase of income have to look to the potential of their occupations. This is what some of the kattadiyas and the craftsmen do. If one's occupation does not provide opportunities of this type and it is too late to equip oneself for external employment one may have to settle for a line of activity which, though lucrative, is disapproved by the society. The hope is that high income and the savings that this enables will make it possible to transfer to another occupation, and so to build up other attributes.

Improving status is, thus, like erecting an inverted pyramid. A person begins with a few or even a single good attribute and he goes higher and higher as he expands. The point of income is to use it to acquire other attributes. If it is saved it should issue

without too much delay in the form of tangible wealth. Or else it must lead to consumption that is advantageous. There is little sense in keeping money idle or in spending it away from the village where few would notice it.[10] One of the first directions of increased expenditure is in the commissioning of rituals to deal with problems, where previously inexpensive medical treatment might have been sought.

There are, however, people who prefer to conceal a rise in income rather than to demonstrate it through a spectacular form of consumption. A rise in status imposes certain burdens. In financial and other matters it becomes necessary to act in a manner that befits the new status. For this reason some would prefer to stick where they are until they feel that they can meet the demands of their new position without strain. The other reason for caution in raising status is the irshiya (jealousy) that it arouses. Irshiya is the complement of status. If thathwaya is raised then irshiya follows from some quarter or another.[11] It will be recalled that sorcery accusations are made against people whose reaction to one's improved status is one of irshiya.[12]

IV Power and Leadership

So much for the essential facts of status. Before attempting to explain what it does in the society I want

to discuss power and leadership briefly and to examine the connections between them and status.

Broadly, I take power to be the ability of a man to influence the behaviour of others - to get them to act in the manner that he desires. In this sense power is a factor in each one of his relations - within the family, with his kinsmen, with his neighbours, in his economic activities, in his relations with others as residents of the village and in his dealings with those who hold village office. It is very much to the fore in group situations - both in influencing the group and in influencing others through the group. Naturally, the way in which he wants others to act varies with each context. Equally, the weapons that he possesses are more effective in some contexts than in others. I shall try to bring out some of the important features of power by examining one relation - that between a landowner and one who works for him.

We have already seen many aspects of this relationship; let me now present it with a slightly different emphasis. How would the landowner like his worker to behave? The worker should show industry and enthusiasm in doing his appointed tasks, identifying himself completely with his master's interests. Besides this he should be ready to help in activities which are outside the normal scope of his duties and for which he will receive no payment. He should not introduce a bargaining

or contractual note into the relationship and must accept whatever he is given as wages. Any reprimands or disciplinary measures must also be accepted without question. The worker should support the landowner's stance in all internal political issues and should vote in national politics in the way that the landowner would like him to.

No landowner is able to get those who work for him to behave in this way. The worker's behaviour approaches this to a greater or lesser extent but never quite reaches it. What is it that determines the level which this behaviour finds? One factor is how well the landowner fulfils his obligations. As seen earlier these include providing the worker with a good living, giving him financial and other assistance where this is necessary, interceding on his behalf with the authorities and with the police, using his contacts to obtain employment for the worker's dependants and so forth. This is the most important aspect but it is not the only one.

In the event of a conflict or breakdown in the relations what is the landowner in a position to do? He can withdraw work from the worker. The circumstances when this is likely to be disadvantageous to the landowner occur when the worker is doing a job for which, through long experience and skill, he is particularly suited. If the landowner has a large following he will

be able to mobilise village opinion in his favour. Influence with the police and with officials may come in useful if the dispute is of a type that warrants their intervention. The landowner can, of course, have recourse to litigation without, like the worker, having to worry about its possibly disastrous financial consequences.

How can the worker react? He can withdraw his political support. Beyond this, is he in a position to fall back on his own resources even for a short time? If this is not so and he cannot dismiss the loss of a job lightly he has little room for manoeuvre. An important weapon that he might have is a reputation for retaliation through any one of three methods - the use of foul language,[13] sorcery, and damage to property.[14] All these tend to lower his status but they increase his power, in that others are wary about offending him. He too can attempt to mobilize public opinion in his favour but he might have to contend against the landowner's larger following. Factors such as the nature of the disagreement, the relative culpability of each side, the status difference between the two, will play a part in the verdict of the community.

It is therefore an interplay of three factors which determines the extent to which the landowner can influence the worker's behaviour - how the landowner fulfils his own obligations and what each can do in the

event of a rift. The landowner's power is, as it were, the resultant of these forces. This is a single type of relation but the same principles apply to other types as well. In what ways can one party help the other? How vital is the withdrawal of this assistance? In what ways can one, if the need arises, retaliate or damage the interests of the other? The powerful man is one who has the advantage, not merely in a few, but over a range of relations.

Power derives from several sources: wealth and income, the control of public resources, assistance to others (especially in the form of a special skill), status (in that this regulates interpersonal behaviour), external contacts, and a reputation for anit-social behaviour. Thus, all power is not approved. Nor is it entirely a matter of resources. Because it is hitched to particular characteristics, it varies in its effectiveness from context to context. That is, a person who has contacts with the police may have enough power to prevent his neighbours from tampering with his boundary fences, but this may be quite insufficient to get A to vote for B.

How then does power relate to status? If power increases, so, most often, does status but there is no one to one correspondence between the two. The rise in status depends on the manner in which power has been increased. If it is the result of greater wealth or a larger following, status is improved but not if the increase

in power is due to acquiring a reputation for anti-social behaviour. On the contrary this leads to a drop in status. It is a step normally taken by those who have little status to lose and who feel that this loss is compensated for by the increase in power. On occasion this very power may lead eventually to the building up of a following and status begins to rise again, but this is very rare. Thus, status and power are not coterminous. There are in fact people who have more power than those who are of higher status than themselves.

If status improves there is a general increase of power. The community frowns upon actions which are disrespectful or otherwise damaging to a person of higher status. Therefore, as status rises the mobilising of public opinion is a weapon that is more readily available. More particularly, the increase in power depends upon the particular attribute through which status is raised.

What approach does the community take to leadership and what is the connection between leadership, power, and status? The Sinhalese word nayakaya translates very well as leader. It is used in much the same way and has the same range of meaning as its English equivalent. As one aspect of a set of interviews which I conducted, I examined the problem of whom the community

regarded as its leaders. Seventy-two interviewees were requested to pick out, from a list of thirty, the ten who, in their opinion, were the leaders of the village. They were then asked to rank them and to give their reasons for doing so. I had previously obtained a reasonably full account of the economic background of each of the interviewees.

This data revealed that there were many different principles used in the rankings. Some gave importance to status; others were more explicit about particular attributes such as wealth and education. A few regarded as crucial the political and other values which the leaders upheld. However, the final ranking revealed that, for the vast majority, the most important factor was the assistance which they themselves, as individuals, received from leaders.

Incidentally, I should like to point out that the difference between these approaches is more apparent than real. Most people need to depend on the wealthy and the powerful in order to deal with their own immediate problems. Those who do not do so derive moral support for their own position, and for the line of mobility that they have selected, from those who are higher up on the scale and on the same line as themselves.

Thus, leadership is largely a subjective matter. A leader is a person who is able to help in one or more ways, who has either already done so or is very likely to

do so when asked. People who can help and refuse to do so, do not merit the position of leader. Many prominent personalities were excluded by interviewees on the basis of their experiences in this respect.

This approach was particularly evident in the rankings made by the minority castes. Many of them flatly refused to select more than three or four leaders on the grounds that there were no others who deserved to be so regarded. The reason for this is clear. They would like to list many members of their own castes as leaders, but the attributes that they possess are weak so that the corresponding capacity to help others is low by the accepted standards. As we saw in the last chapter, the minority castes obtain few benefits from Goigama cliques. Thus it is only the few Goigama landowners with whom they have connections who figure in their lists as leaders.

A leader, then, turns out to be a man with a following and leadership is therefore closely associated with cliques and clusters. It is not inherited. It must be achieved by using one's attributes to increase one's following. It is not a matter of authority, although a person who already has a following may improve his position as a leader by obtaining village office. It is also not primarily the result of ideology. That is, there are no leaders whose only attribute is that they expound a particular point of view.

How does leadership stand in relation to status and power? It is not congruent with status, for there are people of high status who, because of their close-fistedness, receive poor ranking as leaders. But this ranking, in effect the size of the following, is an attribute which affects status. Those who have power have the potential for leadership but all those who have power are not necessarily leaders. It depends on how they use their power - whether this is in socially approved ways or not. A powerful man can do things which affects the vital interests of others. Does he act so as to help them or harm them? Is his influence over them the result of his generosity of of his threats?

It is clear then that status, power, and leadership, though closely related are quite distinct. The approved use of power is leadership; leadership, in turn, is an attribute which enhances status. L. Emis, a land-owner, and N.P. William, a kattadiya, who is also a member of the inner ring of a clique, emerged in the survey as ranking equal in leadership. They have very different strengths. William is concentrating his attributes on the acquisition of leadership, while Emis is doing so only minimally. If status was identical with leadership, that is, if status was merely the approved use of power irrespective of the potential for power, then these two would have equal status. As it is, though they have equal standing as leaders, Emis has a much higher status than

William.

V The Function of Status

What is status really doing? It is a statement that some types of power are good and that others are bad. It then evaluates approved power by considering it, not in isolation, but always in combination with other attributes such as caste, genealogy and values. In this way it makes a distinction between the different ways in which power-producing attributes are acquired. It also takes cognisance of how power is used in that it takes leadership into account. Thus, status is both a recognition of the actuality of power and a moral evaluation of it. It is the instrument through which the community does two things, i.e., recognizes the importance of wealth and yet says that this alone will not ensure for individuals the highest positions. Through it a distinction is made between incomes which, though equal in size, are derived from occupations of different types. In it, therefore, are enshrined the values which govern the distribution of resources. Status brings them down to the level of individual action and, by doing so, acts as a mechanism which controls such action.

These values, as we saw in Section II of this chapter, are the outcome of a particular set of circumstances - the aspirations of the majority of the Goigama and the

lack of opportunities for realising them, coupled with the fact that the internal order has not broken down. It is not surprising, then, that it is by these people, rather than by those whose high status is not in question, that the word thathwaya is most frequently used. Landowners, for instance, tend to think of people more in terms of their inherited wealth and genealogy. This gives status an element of challenge. Another principle for the evaluation of people, a moral view, is being asserted.

This moral view is revealed in another use of status. It is, what may be termed, the idiom of conflict. Status takes in the totality of interests. Mobility is conceptualised in this way. Therefore, it is in terms of status that one's position relative to others is kept under review. One's own achievements and endeavours are justified and those of others are pronounced upon in these terms. Ultimately it is with status that enemies are vanquished.

How can the function of status be explained? To do this let me first go back to some of the features of Remuna history which I outlined in the first chapter. As we saw there and in the chapters that followed, there has been a gradual expansion of the resources available to the village.

There was first the introduction of rubber-growing. The immediate economic benefits of this step were derived by all sectors of the village - those who provided labour, those who were stimulated into producing vegetables and other foodstuffs for the plantation workers, others who benefited from increased trade, and also the wealthier sector which undertook construction and other contract work. In time the village itself took to rubber growing. This influence, though probably harmful in the long run, did not bring about radical changes in economic alignments. This was not a situation where the landowners emulated the rubber entrepreneurs and graduated to the level of urban capitalists, while the rest of the village remained static.

Initially, only a few were able to benefit from the expansion of educational facilities. They did obtain employment but the tradition of working in urban areas did not get established early in Remuna as it did in villages which were on a rail route.[15] By the time Remuna had taken full advantage of the educational opportunities which the area provided, and by the time that the transport services available to a commuter were adequate, unemployment in the country had reached a high level. Thus, although external employment has resulted in conspicuous changes in the economic positions of many individuals, it has not brought about the radical changes which it would have done if such employment had been freely

available to all those who were qualified enough to obtain it.

The development of transport also gave Remuna certain opportunities. One landowner established himself through running a small bus service, but before he could expand beyond the level of a village capitalist he was bought over by a regional company. Other landowners too dabbled in this but were less successful. Others found employment as members of bus crews and have ended up as employees of the Transport Board. The better transport facilities also helped those who traded at fairs and those who took produce to Colombo.

When substantial government assistance began to flow into the village, the landowners had lost some of their earlier authority. It was, therefore, not they who controlled the deployment of this assistance. Further, as we have already seen, in the more recent history of the village the control of this resource has not been the exclusive privilege of any one sector of the community.

My purpose in this recapitulation is to emphasise three points. When compared with villages in the maritime belt, the resources which have become available to Remuna are limited. They have not promoted any striking mobility in any but a few instances. The benefits have been fairly evenly spread out and the dislocation caused has been minimal. The rich have not improved their wealth to anything like the point at which the village

would be too small a field for their endeavours. The opportunities elsewhere have not been such that the others have been attracted away from the village; they have had some employment though not as much as they had hoped. This, as well as government aid, has compensated to some extent for the deteriorating situation in relation to land. In all, the poor have not become so poor that they have had to leave the village; the internal order has not broken down.

It is against this background that the significance of land must be seen. It will be recalled that the functions land performs varies from person to person. It provides only residence for some, a major portion of their income as well for others, while a third category, in addition to both these, finds in it an avenue of power by virtue of the fact that the land which they own provides work for others.

The big conflict is over residential land, and here two features are clearly evident. High prices are paid for it; higher than what may be taken as the valuer's rate.[16] There is a marked lack of migration to villages in the interior even where land is comparatively plentiful and cheap. The same competition does not exist over productive land, for this concerns a smaller sector of the population. But here again the prices paid are in excess of the valuer's rates. The

goal is to invest in this particular place, and capital, it would appear, is not moving in the direction of best economic return. It may be concluded, then, that the strong desire to safeguard rights in residential land and the overpayment for the economic and power benefits of productive land is an indication that Remuna land has, in Remuna eyes, some special quality.

Let us consider, in the rather simplified, black and white terms of 'rich' and 'poor', what each side gets from the community. The rich have the best share of the land and receive respect, support and labour from the poor. The poor get co-operation and assistance from their equals while the rich provide them with work and income. The connection is also an insurance against contingencies. Having little in the way of skills and resources, the poor find it difficult to establish themselves in a new community should they decide to emigrate. It is, therefore, in their interests to support a system which protects their rights in Remuna.

The rich do not enjoy a level of resources which enables them, or for that matter makes it necessary, to spread their umbrella of patronage wider than the village. They have a good return of power - in terms of client strength - on the investment that they are able to make. It is true that they have the resources to emigrate but a higher return of power will only be possible in a village which does not possess the amenities or the urban

contacts of Remuna. The degree of power enjoyed here is judged preferable to reigning in the backwoods.

The principle on which the system interlocks is thus the strengths of the two sides. For the vast majority, viewing the problem in regional or even in country-wide terms, this place offers the most favourable set of relations given their present strengths. In no community of similar standing will they be able to enjoy these rights or this level of status. It is in this context that village membership is crucial. A set of values responding to a complex of resources works as a mechanism through which rights to these resources are safeguarded. Or, more simply, ideology protects the rights of membership and membership implies a particular place which is 'land'.

Given the present economic conditions, land defines the limits and extents of profitable interaction, The effect of these limits is to make the forces in the community largely centrifugal. The relations within the village are more critical than those with outsiders. Indeed, relations with the latter have meaning largely in terms of its effect on the former, for gains acquired outside are used for social profit inside. The village is not a unit of income; it is, however, an arena of investment and expenditure. Land, then, provides a livelihood and, when it is not able to do so fully, binds people together in a field of interdependence based on the

foundation of their strengths vis-a-vis the outside world. It is this which gives land its special significance, its prominence in the idiom of social relations, and which elevates it to the level of value and sanctity.

To bring out the essential features of the argument I have used the dichotomy of 'rich' and 'poor'. We have seen, though, that the poorer sectors do possess skills which enable them to tap resources outside the community. The rich have also begun to purchase land and make other investments beyond the village. These trends will, however, have to go much further before they can affect the complex of resources which gives rise to the present approach to land. Another factor which can change it is the rise in value of land in Remuna due to its proximity to Horana. The price that buyers from Horana are at present willing to pay lags behind the local price but it will not be long before the latter is overtaken by the former. These forces individually and jointly can, and most probably will, turn Remuna into a suburb of Horana. However, this is as yet some way in the future, and land as 'place' continues to determine social relations.

Remuna is, then, a village with a high degree of integration. It is a field of resources. This is not because it is self-sufficient, not because it is a unit of income but because it is a unit of consumption.

This is where all the social gains are made. External relations are significant only in so far as they affect internal ones. As a result these latter are many-sided relations.

To maintain this type of cohesion the village has to control the resources available to it - internal resources have to be allocated and external resources have to be regulated. Let us go back and see how this was done in the latter part of the last century.

Land was at that time the only form of wealth and practically the only source of income. It was not scarce, nor was the water necessary for cultivation; the scarcity was of a different sort. It must be remembered that in Remuna there are few Goigama families who have been there for much longer than a hundred years. When these families came in they either purchased land from the government, cleared forest land for themselves, or bought land from the Vahumpura. Turning bare land into paddy fields involved labour and incoming families had to be sure that they had enough people for this purpose. Labour was the real scarcity and families which had this were able to establish themselves quickly in the village.

With the next generation the family (even if it had been only a nuclear family rather than a group of brothers, as was more usual) grew into a patronymic group. The lands of this group were concentrated in one area, it

was small in size, it was seen to be a unit and the economic differences between its members was not marked. The rivalries, apart from those of caste, were between the patronymic groups. It is his membership of such a group which fixed to a great extent a man's position in the community.

The movement of land was controlled by kinship. Sales, though less frequent than now, did take place but there were strong sanctions against sale to those outside the patronymic group. Taking resources as a whole, that is, taking land as well as the services which the community needed, it can be concluded that caste and kinship were the ideologies which controlled them.

Over the years, and particularly during the last thirty years conditions have changed. The individual has become prominent in the resources to which the village now has access. Where these can be controlled by groups it is not the patronymic group which is relevant any more but others, such as cliques and clusters, which cut across them. Patrynomic group rivalries are less sharp than they once were and it is only under special circumstances that they show any solidarity. Intra-village marriage has led to members of a patronymic group inheriting land in all parts of the village so that the majority of groups are no longer concentrated in one area. The economic differences between those who belong to the same group are now quite marked. Their incomes come from many different sources and no longer do they

need to submit to the will of the group. Kinship by itself (and caste within the wider community) cannot any longer control the relations which the new resources have given rise to. It is in this situation of multiple resources which needs a generalised ideology that the concept of status has emerged.

Status does not, however, stand in opposition to kinship. It incorporates kinship for we have seen genealogy to be an important constituent of status. The connections between the two are, in fact, quite close as two points will illustrate. Kinship too performed dual functions as status does now. It expressed the actual facts of landholding as well as the legitimacy of such holding. Patronymic groups in their rankings of each other took into account both the extents held as well as how the land had been acquired. Had it been inherited? Was the group one which had migrated into the village recently? Was it obtained through duplicity and so on.

The other point is that status too relates to land although in a different way from kinship. It is true that now land is not the totality of resources. Status has arisen to meet the new situation but land still determines the field of interaction. It sets the limits for the jural order. If these limits remove themselves then it is very doubtful whether status would be the concept that it is now. It is difficult to visualise

status regulating social relations if Remuna becomes a suburb of Horana.

We can now see status as a concept which is peculiar to a transitional stage between relative self-sufficiency and integration into a wider economy. It deals with many bases of power and is unlikely to be found in a context where any one attribute dominates. It has to reflect the current distribution of resources but is also a mechanism through which the community accommodates change. Status is not loaded with values which are resistant to change but it attempts to select and channel new influences in accordance with the interests of the majority.

Other communities also evaluate power and rank people. But not in every village, even in the surrounding area, does status have the importance that it has in Remuna. What is the reason for such a difference? Suppose we contrast Remuna with a village in which a sizable number of the relations significant to the individual are with people outside the village. He may then be a member of many groups of which the residential one is the village. Only certain of his attributes are then of concern to the village and it will want to control only some of his powers. This is then not a total system and will not have a total concept.

Status is, as we have seen, the result of two

factors - the strengths of the people of Remuna vis-a-vis the outside world (and vis-a-vis each other) and the multiple resources which are now available to it. One without the other is not likely to make status a sharp tool. A community with a single resource will not need to differentiate between its members in status terms. Nor is it likely that this would be done by a multi-resource community which was not anxious to preserve its jural relations in the face of difficulties with the outside world. It is, therefore, not possible to appreciate the significance of status without taking into account Remuna's external relations. It is its position in the region and ultimately in the country itself which it is responding to with status.

This discussion of status has I hope given more meaning to features of Remuna society discussed in earlier chapters. The emphasis on high land becomes clear; it is residence that is crucial. Emigration is limited despite the shortage of land. Investment is confined to village avenues and the expansion of a successful business beyond the village boundaries is rare. Outsiders are not welcome and are given a low status rating. For a village that is so near a town, Remuna is not very hospitable to town ways. It sees itself as a distinct unit in opposition to Horana and its values.

VI Status and Groups

Status relates people to resources. It is not, however, the only device through which resources are allocated. To complete the analysis it is necessary to examine the connection between status and the various groupings in the society.

We have seen above that patronymic groups have lost somewhat in importance as the fundamental social grouping within the caste, particularly among the Goigama. Patronymic group membership is still a characteristic that is significant in the context of marriage but other attributes have become even more important - in particular, occupation. From a parent's point of view the ideal has always been to find spouses for his children from other villages. Several reasons are given for this - wives will not then run back to the parental home at the first hint of trouble, the need for external connections and so on. One aspect of this is undoubtedly that a family demonstrates in this way that it possesses characteristics which are marketable in other villages. Previously the quality of the patronymic group was the dominant consideration in this. Today other attributes have also to be considered and the amphasis has shifted to the wider concept of status. This is reflected in the fact that other members of the patronymic group are consulted much less than they were before in arranging a marriage.

The decline of the patronymic group is somewhat less among the Radaw and the Berawa - especially among the latter. Through their patronymic they identify themselves as people who have migrated to Remuna from a particular area. This area, they assert is particularly well known for the skill with which one or more of the branches of their caste occupation is practised. It is, therefore, a means of validating their claims to village custom against that of their fellow caste-men. To those who have given up the caste occupation this is much less important.

Some of the forms in which caste differences were previously expressed are no longer current,[17] but distinctions between the castes are far from beginning to get blurred. People are looked at very much in terms of the caste to which they belong in many different contexts - commensality, general association, co-operation in agriculture (as opposed to paid labour) and above all in marriage. Nothing arouses Goigama indignation more than an intra-village marriage with one of the other castes.[18] Caste, therefore, retains its rigidity and there are several reasons for this.

The Goigama want to continue the control over resources which they have always had. In a situation where resources are not expanding fast enough, they feel

that concessions to the others will be made at the expense of interests which they should do all they can to safeguard. That is, they want no alteration in the ratio of land held between them and the other castes. They want full control of the resources which the government makes available to the village. They have, of course, no direct means of controlling the external employment which the Vahumpura succeed in obtaining. But they would like very much to see some ceiling imposed.

These views are seldom openly stated. The form in which they are usually expressed is by emphasising the need which the village has of the services provided by the other castes. By implication, this is their proper function and they need have no ambition, either of acquiring land or of controlling village affairs.

However much the Berawa and Radaw may resent this, they face, as we have seen already, a dilemma. If they agitate for a more egalitarian system they throw away the present benefits which they derive from their caste occupation. Therefore, until alternative occupations become possible they are anxious to safeguard their rights in the village, the accompanying disabilities notwithstanding.

The Vahumpura position is different. They have no caste occupation but there are other factors which reinforce their Vahumpura identity. In the electorate to

which Remuna belongs, the Vahumpura are of a strength numerically sufficient for them to be wooed as a distinct group.[19] At election time, if at no other, they are in a position to make demands. The other benefit which they receive as a group is in the form of donations to Vahumpura activities in the village from wealthy members of their caste who are resident elsewhere.[20] Thus while the Goigama attempt to maintain their hold in the village by preserving caste distinctions, the others, while anxious to improve their position are not keen to lose their identity.[21]

This is no more than a way of saying that the the castes are interdependent. Given their present beliefs the Goigama need the services of the Radaw and the Berawa. The Radaw must have the patronage of a community if they are to survive and the Berawa need a home village from which to operate. The Goigama do not need the Vahumpura in the same way since the latter have ceased to officiate as cooks at Goigama functions. Besides, if the Vahumpura left the village this would be to the advantage of the Goigama in that they would have more land. Yet such a step is seen as an attack on the Goigama as the leading caste in a multi-caste community. The Vahumpura face the problem of all those who belong to the poorer sectors of the village - they have neither the resources nor the skills to emigrate. They are both too small in numbers and too

scattered geographically to be an effective community on their own and are thus forced to function as an integral sector of the village.

It is this interdependence which is recognised by applying status, not merely to the Goigama, but to the minority castes as well. They are part of one system. In this context it is interesting to note that the word kulaya is applied to both caste and patronymic groups. The inference that may be made is that the other castes are, from the Goigama viewpoint, very inferior patronymic groups.

What is the significance of class in Remuna? If class is to appear as a purely local phenomenon, then two conditions appear to be necessary. Resources must be controlled by a small number of people; there must be a lack of contact between this group and the rest of the village. This is a feature in villages where a substantial part of the land has been given over to plantations. Not only are resources unevenly distributed but it is often non-resident outsiders who have a large share of it.[22] The village does not receive the protection and assistance which can normally be expected from resident patrons; there is a patronage vacuum. In such circumstances both class feeling and ideological leadership develops. These are not the

features which characterise Remuna.

The other possibility is that class awareness could arise as a result of external employment and connections. Government employees, teachers, monks and the members of the minority castes are among those who see themselves as having a common interest with people elsewhere who are similarly placed. This manifests itself at the time of a general election, but there are reasons why it is not pushed too far at other times.

Of the Goigama in this group, the larger percentage have achieved some status in the village. To talk about class is, for them, to undermine this very status by including themselves in a wide category to which even the minority castes belong.[23] What they gain by doing so at any but election time is very nebulous. There are no external resources which can be claimed on a class basis. Moreover, while class is, perhaps, an element in the evolution of some cliques, landowner wealth is too insubstantial for such an axis to develop fully.

All this finds expression in the choice which the village has made between class and status, which are to a considerable extent conflicting ideologies. It has chosen to preserve its boundaries. The village has not responded to the resources before it in the horizontal, extra-village, terms of class but in the vertical terms

of class but in the vertical terms which are the corollary of status: its significant groupings are patrons (and cliques which behave as if they were patrons) and their clients.

This situation can change very easily; class can become an important basis for allegiance. As I have pointed out, there are many young people in the village who have received secondary school and even university education but who have found no suitable employment. So far the village has managed to contain the tensions that this failure produces. Though the unemployed cannot expect even the meagre allowances which they received as students, their essential needs can in most cases be met out of the family budget. In village eyes they have achieved some mobility through education, despite the lack of a job. Some of them are active in village societies, assisting those who control them, by functioning as their bureaucratic arm.

Thus, the system has managed to absorb in some degree the traumatic effects of their predicament. But it cannot do so for much longer. In some cases univeristy education has been possible only through mortgaging land. This has been done in the hope that the land could be redeemed when employment followed graduation. These hopes have been belied and there is anger and frustration. It is beginning to lead to political explorations of an extra-village kind. The common interest between them and those

in other villages who are in similar straits is being recognised, whereas previously they were thought of more as rivals. It would not be long before any political party which promised radical changes had their support.

We have now seen how status relates to class, caste and the patronymic group. What of the cliques and clusters and the patron-client idiom which underlies it? There are patron-client elements in some relationships in most societies and these aspects can usefully be described in such terms. But the patron-client approach can have analytical validity only if this is the predominant feature of many of the important relationships in the society. Its significance for the flow of resources and the distribution of power must be high. What are the characteristics of the Remuna system?

As far as patron and clients go this is a closed system. Patrons want clients within the village and clients cannot manage to get patrons outside it. There is competition between clients for patrons and between patrons for clients. Choice is reasonably open. Goigama patrons can select their clients either from their own caste or from any of the others. Goigama clients normally stick to Goigama patrons. Vahumpura clients can choose between Goigama and Vahumpura patrons; so can

clients from the other two castes.

Patron-client links are not static. It is true that there have been no recent recruits to the landowner ranks. However, at the level immediately below this, teachers and others who have external employment keep expanding their capacity for patronage. This has its effect on their ranking vis-a-vis others, as well as on the part that they are able to play in internal politics.

About fifty percent of the population derive some part of their direct income (besides other benefits) through relationships which are patron-client in character. In return they give much more than their actual services. It will be seen therefore that patron-client is the idiom of many key relationships in the community. These cut across the formal groups and span the whole society. Most important, there are many resources which can be obtained only in this way. Some resources are only available to a client; others can only be controlled by somebody who has a following.

The patron-client emphasis has become pronounced in recent times due to a shift in resources. The important resource of external employment can only be exploited by individuals. Communal resources which come from the Government are given to the village as a whole - they are not divided between the different sections within it. Those who want control of these must have a following which is drawn from a base which is wider than that of patronymic

group or, at times, even that of caste. The result is that the concept of a leader and of a powerful man has changed. A different range of attributes are now necessary and it is these which are encapsulated in status. In this context an individual's links are often more important than the formal groups to which he belongs. His power is reflected in the quality of his links, while, at the same time, they have an important bearing on the attributes which determine his status.

I have sought in this section to bring out three points. It is status rather than class which the community has chosen in organising its relations. Status has 'absorbed' both caste and patronymic group. The corollaries of status are the patron-client character of relationships and the significance which links possess.

VII Conclusion

Let me conclude. To recapitulate, the argument of this chapter runs as follows. The village has access to certain resources. These are distributed in a particular way giving power to those who possess and control them. The community attempts to control this distribution through norms and values. The principle behind these norms and values is the position of the village

and its constituent sectors vis-a-vis the outside world. Status embodies these norms and values and acts as a mechanism of control. It is, therefore, a response to a particular complex of resources.

To place this argument in a wider perspective a final point needs to be stressed. Status is an ideology; while it is the product of a particular system of resources it also reacts back on the resources. It is in response to the values of the community, and in the context of their significance for status reckoning, that landowners refrain from making land purchases which tend to squeeze others into inadequate shares. Again, it is these values, rather than the strictly economic factors, which confine entrepreneurial activity in Remuna to its particular range.

In an immediate sense values are a response to resources. On a wider view of the system this is a two-way process. Resources give rise to values and these in turn determine how resources shall be exploited.

Footnotes to Chapter Six

1 Other rituals such as the Yak-thovil performed by the kattadiya appear to have gained by this.

2 The broad level of his power is, however, clearly indicated by the general course of temple affairs. See page 114.

3 One made his money in the transport trade. The other was a mason who did sub-contract work for building contractors.

4 If the village had its own kapurala and if the ayruvedic physicians had been more successful this might have been different.

5 Teachers are credited with much financial acumen.

6 But for this Emonis would have had more support in the 1967 Village Committee election.

7 See page 187.

8 See page 45

9 Although I speak simply of attributes, it is to the ranked attributes that I refer.

10 Contrary to the popular impression, money is seldom hoarded even though it may not be used in a way that is desirable from the viewpoint of the national economy.

11 It is said in the village that even the Lord Buddha did not escape irshiya.

12 See page 120.

13 This is demeaning for those who are the targets of it.

14 This is not of much consequence to those who have little status to lose.

15 Bus travel at this time was both unreliable and expensive in comparison with rail travel.

16 The rate given by the court valuer for legal purposes. The 'average' values which are sufficient for these purposes appear to take little note of the distinctions made within the village.

17 This is particularly so in dress.

18 A marriage between a Goigama man and a Radaw woman which took place about six years ago is still talked about. There are people on the Goigama side who suggest that a legal marriage never took place

19 At the 1965 General Election one of the candidates was a member of this caste.

20 This is given mostly for temple activities.

21 This is not necessarily so when they migrate elsewhere, especially if this happens to be a place in which their own caste is not strongly represented. They may then pass off as belonging to the dominant caste in that area. It is often suggested in the village that many of the families who have settled there in more recent times and who are now regarded as Goigama did in fact belong to other castes in their original villages.

22 The single plantation in Remuna is not large enough to provoke this reaction. However, there has been considerable agitation to have this compulsorily acquired by the government

so that it could be re-sold in blocks to the people in the village who need land for residential purposes.

23 From the wider urban viewpoint, the whole village, with the exception of a few families, falls into one class.

GLOSSARY

Anda-goviya	Tenant-cultivator of paddy fields.
Bali-edura	Ritual practitioner who deals with the planetary deities.
Devale	Centre for the worship of the gods.
Havul (land)	A block of high land in which several people have coparcenery rights.
Irshiya	Jealousy
Kapurala	Ritual practitioner who mediates between men and the gods.
Kattadiya	Ritual practitioner who deals with the devils
Nayakaya	Leader
Niravul (land)	A block of high land which is owned by a single individual. (As opposed to havul land.)
Sinnakkara (fields)	Paddy fields owned by a single individual. (As opposed to thattumaru fields.)
Thathwaya	Status
Thattumaru (fields)	Paddy fields in which a rotational system operates.

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